

القرآن الكريم
وَمَا لِلدِّينِ مِنْ عِندِنَا

THE
ASCENDANT QUR'AN
Realigning Man to the Divine Power Culture

VOLUME 9
Al-Mā'idah: 1–40



Muḥammad Ḥ. al-Āṣī



In the Name of Allah,
the Mercy-Giving, the Merciful

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Muḥammad H. al-Āṣī

THE INSTITUTE OF CONTEMPORARY ISLAMIC THOUGHT
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Allah (ﷻ) says in His noble Book,

إِنَّ اللَّهَ وَمَلَائِكَتَهُ يُصَلُّونَ عَلَى النَّبِيِّ
يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا صَلُّوا عَلَيْهِ وَسَلِّمُوا تَسْلِيمًا ﴿٥٦﴾

“Verily, Allah and His Angels send salutations on the Apostle. O You who are firmly committed [to Allah], you too [must] send the most worthy salutations and blessings upon him.”
(Sūrah al-Aḥzāb:56)

In launching this *tafsir*, beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless His final Messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ), all the Prophets (ﷺ) who preceded him, and all those who, despite great difficulty and sacrifice, sincerely follow in their footsteps from the *ṣāliḥūn*, the *ṣiddiqūn*, the *shuhadā'*, and the *marḥūmūn*. We also beseech Allah (ﷻ) to bless and amply reward those who have helped in the publication of this *tafsir* in whatever capacity.

— The Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought

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Publisher's Foreword

As this volume goes to press (late-1436AH), the combination of Wahhābism, Zionism, and imperialism has fertilized a fresh landscape of killing fields in the majority Muslim part of the world. How many of their own will the Muslims have to sacrifice before they return, en masse, to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ)?

Syria is now hemorrhaging refugees at an unprecedented clip, many of whom are now ending up as underclasses in the home territories of their colonial persecutors. What was Iraq for all practical purposes is now functioning as three separate countries, perhaps mission accomplished for the purveyors of the “new world order” (according to a version of events recorded by those who aim to figure prominently in their own history). Libya is, simply put, a minefield; recently a country with the highest standard of living in Africa, today its people fear to leave their own homes, and there is question if they are even safe at home. Egypt's medieval crack-down — in full hi-definition view of those who bluster about the “responsibility to protect” — has incarcerated, sentenced to death, and prevented from political participation the only viable and representative political party in the country; its generals took down

an elected government while the zealous (and opportunistic) champions of democracy applauded. Turkey, a member of NATO, is not only training and equipping the mercenaries responsible for creating the catastrophe in Syria, but it is simultaneously punishing the Kurds for participating and winning in a “democratic” process endorsed by the elected Turkish government. Distraught that their post-Sykes-Picot independent Kurdistan was becoming a pipe dream, the clever colonial-cum-imperial seditionists found the useful idiots they needed in Ankara (by war) and Riyadh (by “diplomacy”) to actively market an Israeli Kurdistan in the heartland of Islam.

In the Peninsula, Saudi ground troops are gearing up to march — in one of *al-ashhur al-ḥurum*, no less (!) — into the sovereign territory of their southern neighbor Yemen, after carpet bombing its major cities and population centers, and after depriving the poorest country in the Arab world of food and medicine. Yemen apparently had the temerity to choose (Zaydī) representatives who were not the handpicked sentinels of the local hegemon as well as its enabling superpower underwriter. The Holy Land from al-Quds to al-Ḥijāz is still under the occupation of the most brutal, unscrupulous, “scriptural” tribal throwbacks the world has ever known. And the tragic coverup of the rampant human rights violations in Bahrain, all with a view to prop up the imperialist military base there through the agency of a foreign monarchy rejected by the indigenous people, is nothing more than an afterthought.

Elsewhere, the ongoing rape by imperial and colonial acquisitiveness of the mostly Muslim Saharan and West African countries — who sport the dangerous and exploitable combination of Western-“educated” chief executives and “enterprising” ministers, a very low standard of living, and a treasure trove of resources — has been carefully sequestered from mainstream media coverage. Even though the imperial occupation of Afghanistan will apparently officially come to an end, there will be no end to the numerous night raids that terrorize innocent and mostly poor families in unsuspecting villages, and to the drone strikes that are supposed to target high-value insurgents but ultimately end up killing mostly civilians.

Pakistan, reeling from its endemic economic and political crises, has no strategic foreign policy to decide whether to send troops to Yemen on behalf of Saudi Arabia so as to keep pliant its oil relationship with the monarchy, or not to do so in order to preserve its precarious relationship with its own people. In Myanmar, the celebrated flag-bearers of “democracy” feel it is acceptable to put their political conscience on the shelf and exclude Muslim domestic participation from the new supposedly “representative” government. And it goes on, through all of which it was hardly noticed how quietly Muslim Bosnia practically ceased to exist.

And finally in this world of manufactured consent, smoke-screens, and mixed messages, the Sunnī Muslim world that was baited to attack and kill off the other half of its own social and spiritual conscience is now being given a clashing set of marching orders. The Saudi peddlers of sectarianism are now condemning the monsters they spent billions of riyals, hours, and “courses” creating. But they are not doing this because they are all of a sudden swayed by principle, by Qur’anic imperatives of justice, or by prophetic motivations to brotherhood; rather they are in break-and-fix mode because their prodigal son is now coming home to claim what’s his. And so the committed Muslims need to be more careful now than ever — and to cut through all the murkiness, Muslims of all stripes and colors need the clarity of this Qur’an now more than ever.

Sūrah al-Mā'idah is the fifth in the order of sequence of *sūrah*s in the noble Qur’an and fourth in the set of opening *sūrah*s that together guide us in the long, drawn-out struggle toward constituting an Ummah, organizing a government, and consolidating a society. As with all *sūrah*s of the noble Qur’an, the period of revelation is significant because it sheds light on the context in which the divine commands were delivered. This is especially important for *sūrah*s revealed in Madinah because of the fast-paced transformational changes that were taking place as the Islamic socio-political and economic order was being consolidated in society within the framework of the Islamic State.

The *sūrah* takes its name — *al-Mā'idah* (the Tablespread) — from reference to the narration of a tablespread from heaven after

the disciples of Jesus (ﷺ) asked for it. It is also known as *Sūrah al-'Uqūd* (the Chapter on Contracts) and *Sūrah al-Munqidhah* (the Chapter on Deliverance). Thus, the *sūrah* includes legislative material such as injunctions relating to contracts, marriage to morally fortified and upright women belonging to people of previous scripture, and the “living will.” Also included are divine statutes on slaughtered and hunted animals, as well as on animal hunting during the state of *iḥrām* and its legal repercussions. There are guidelines touching on issues of ritual cleanliness (*ṭahārah*): *wuḍū'*, *ghuṣl*, and *tayammum* (ablution, full bath, and surface soil as a substitute for water). There are also laws that prohibit the consumption of liquor (alcohol), intoxicating substances, and habit-forming drugs. These advance and refine the injunctions revealed in the previous *sūrah* where the intake of intoxicants, especially alcohol, was described as more harmful than beneficial. This *sūrah* puts an end to their intake altogether. Also outlined are punitive measures for theft and highway banditry as well as a penalty for taking a false oath or affidavit (*kaffārah al-yamīn*).

If *Sūrah al-Nisā'* dealt with the negative fallout resulting from the setback the Muslims suffered at the Battle of Uḥud (3AH), which emboldened the *mushriks*, Yahūd, and *munāfiqs*, this *sūrah* radiates a much more confident aura. In the three-year period between the Battle of Uḥud and the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah (6AH), the Muslims had emerged as the preeminent power in the Arabian Peninsula. The setback at Uḥud had emboldened the enemies of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) to launch a full-scale attack on the Islamic State in Madinah.

Referred to as the Battle of al-Aḥzāb (the Confederates) — also known as Ghazwah al-Khandaq (Battle of the Trench) — in which all the *mushrik* and Yahūdī power centers of Arabia coalesced into more than 10,000 heavily-armed fighters, aided and abetted by the *munāfiqs* inside of Madinah (a “coalition of the willing” of that day), it was an attempt to contain the expanding influence of Islam and its impeccable champion, Muhammad (ﷺ), by asphyxiating the nascent Islamic State located in what was then considered to be a backwater of Makkah. Occurring in the month of Shawwāl (5AH),

the Battle of al-Aḥzāb was not as much armed combat as it was a month-long siege of Madinah. The besieging confederates could not have failed more utterly; they were confounded in their plan of attack by the strategic trench the intrepid Muslims dug as a defense mechanism to bar access to the city-state of Islam. This unfamiliar war tactic was compounded by firstly, a massive nighttime storm that uprooted the invaders' encampments, resulting in their desertion of the battlefield; and secondly, their diminishing supplies and resources that prevented them from continuing the siege beyond a month. This was the *mushriks'* last military hurrah, as from here on, the Islamic State would be on the offensive, never allowing them to attack the committed Muslims' base of operations again.

The *mushriks'* and their allies' failure in the Battle of al-Aḥzāb led to the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah with the chiefs of Makkah near the end of 6AH. While initially viewed as a setback by many of the Muslim companions of the Prophet (ﷺ), the treaty in fact consolidated Muslim power in the Arabian Peninsula. Allah (ﷻ) declared it a "manifest victory" (48:01). The Muslims were now recognized as an independent power and not merely a breakaway faction of the Quraysh. This helped swell the ranks of the Muslims exponentially.

This new reality, in which the truth was now attended by its powerful advocates, needed a more refined set of injunctions so as to have the Muslims sidestep the pitfalls encountered by earlier power wielders, especially political Jews and political Christians (Zionists and imperialists), who had become inebriated with the power Allah (ﷻ) had bestowed upon them, and hence felt a sense of entitlement as "God's children." They violated their covenant with God when they assumed that their temporal power gave them the license to be oblivious of His interposing power presence as they moved about in the world in the manner of unaccountable kings, treating scripture as their personal property, changing it to the whim of their special interests, and deleting passages that would indict their pathological concentration of power. They wanted to have the power of their adversaries without having to be burdened by the sacrifices and responsibilities that accompany the exercise of power in the service of truth. On the one hand, their displaced fear

of temporal authority inured them from the sacrifices that would have secured for them a homeland,

[Said Moses], “O my people! Enter the holy land that Allah has promised you — but do not turn back [on your faith], for then you will be lost!” They answered, “O Moses! Behold, ferocious people dwell in that land, and we will surely not enter it unless they depart therefrom; but if they depart therefrom, then, behold, we will enter it... never shall we enter that [land] so long as those others are in it. Go forth, then, you and your Sustainer, and fight, both of you! We, behold, shall remain here!” (5:21–24);

and on the other, their claim to a bloodline from God erased the humility of human nature, making the “hand of God” on earth into an irresponsible instrument of terror rather than a principled herald of peace and harmony,

O you who are committed [to Allah]! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to Allah, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being conscious of Allah’s [corrective power]. And remain conscious of Allah’s [corrective power presence]: verily, Allah is aware of all that you do (5:8).

As a looking glass into the self-centered attitudes and egotistical dispositions that lead to condemnable behavior, the historic and enduring racism of political Jewry is highlighted as a case in point. Muslims are warned to avoid the conduct of earlier recipients of the divine message who abandoned or set aside these injunctions as they became engrossed in their own self-importance and the pursuit of worldly pleasures. Muslims are called upon to conform to Allah’s (ﷻ) divine guidance in all circumstances and

not be swayed by worldly allures or grandeurs of power that might lead them to perpetrate injustice.

This requires adhering to clear concepts, adopting a well-understood position, and implementing a well-rounded “religious doctrine.” And the entire program as such, with the objective of demonstrating Allah’s (ﷻ) will on earth, has been layed out (correlated) in this *sūrah* of the noble Book. What is entailed by this “covenant” with Allah (ﷻ) — in word and in deed — is the unequivocal commitment to His command, the acknowledgement of His divinity, the allegiance to His authority as lawmaker and lawgiver, the consent to His supremacy, and the fulfillment of His testament. In order to lead an organized existence in a well-structured society, human beings must, therefore, procure their value system and legal system, as well as their standards and criteria from Allah (ﷻ) — and from Him alone. No other man-made authority or power center can be allowed to intrude into this domain.

In the Israeli-imposed “system” of materialistic chaos in the world today, which is cleverly, but consistently, given the veneer of values, this is not easy. Injustice has been institutionalized: mass murder has made people oblivious to their own humanity and naked exploitation in the name of laissez-faire capitalism has been thoroughly socialized into the human appraisal of the way things are, or ought to be. The noble Qur’an repeatedly speaks against such injustices and it has drawn particular attention to the decomposition of the healthy relationship between man and God, especially insofar as the generational proponents of that disintegration — Banū Isrā’īl — thrive in this milieu of their own creation, symptomatic of which is the unrepentant and corporatized murder of innocents (5:32). The murder of even one innocent person is equated with the murder of all humanity; and yet today, hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of lives, mostly of Muslims, are routinely snuffed out with nary a tear of remorse or a word of protest from the chief executives, presidents, prime ministers, kings, pundits, experts, intelligence analysts, risk assessors, media moguls, and military officers who authorize and enable genocide, crimes against humanity, and holocausts for the security of Zion.

The Qur'anic discourse is meant to build the Islamic personality. The opening *āyāt* of this *sūrah* like many others in the noble Book emphasize this aspect forcefully. Only an Islamic personality can handle the imperative of dispensing and adjudicating justice impartially. This theme of exercising power in a just or abusive fashion is most clearly evident in the area of unnecessarily taking human life, which in our world today is not only institutional, but ideological: that is, people in power decide who lives and who dies based on cost/benefit analyses, and not on the moral and inalienable right that everyone has to life free from coercion and exploitation. This is all in line with the Israeli disposition of making a public show of championing human rights, but when called to make sacrifices for principle, they either withdraw or find comfort in league with tyranny (that is, they rationalize injustice), as they did by summarily refusing Mūsá (ﷺ), their prophet, who had implored them to liberate the Holy Land.

It seems little has changed over the many centuries despite a chain of prophets sent by Allah (ﷻ) to deliver the divine message and then the final Messenger (ﷺ) establishing it as a transcendental social pattern (*sunnah*) — a shining example for eternity. Today, the world is again in the grip of the Israeli covenant-breakers: killing is a business and breaking the covenant with God is more a strategy (to achieve other worldly objectives) than an outcome. Everyone, even the majority of Muslims, regardless of what they “believe,” ultimately behave this way. And all of them are doing that because they have been socialized to this end, as the characteristics of the consummate covenant crashers have become the world’s “values.”

It is clear that the struggle of the Islamic movement will not be easy; it never has been. It was not easy for the Prophets of Allah (ﷺ) and it will not be easy for the inheritors of their legacy, the committed Muslims of today. Confronting such institutional injustice will require adherence to clear precepts and steely determination. There will be strong opposition from those in positions of power and authority — the entrenched elite, the deep state, and the status quo cheerleaders. When they see their vested interests threatened, they will react and do so violently. This was true at the

time of the noble Messenger of Allah (ﷺ) and his companions, and it is the case today. Bolstered by the popular will of the Muslim masses, only the committed Muslims can take on this challenge. Such a responsibility places them in a leading position to jointly realize their task even though initially they will have few friends or supporters. Numbers, however, have never determined the outcome of any struggle; commitment and the willingness to make sacrifices for cherished principles have always carried the day.

There can be no room for materialistic pursuits along this divinely-ordained path. Earthly priorities and mundane obsessions have to be spurned because the purpose is altogether different and far nobler: a world based and ordered on divine principles. When Muslims make such a commitment, they will earn the pleasure of Allah (ﷻ) who gave the glad tidings to the noble Messenger (ﷺ) during his lifetime — a promise that is available to committed Muslims today as well as in the future,

...today, those who are in denial of Allah have lost all hope of [your ever forsaking] your *dīn*: do not, then, hold them in awe, but stand in awe of Me! Today have I perfected your *dīn* for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your *dīn* (5:03).

The question that Muslims must ask is: how can we return to the principles of divine justice? This is not possible if people in general, and Muslims in particular, lead a schizophrenic existence, that is, they cannot have one master in the church, synagogue, or *masjid*, and another one in the classroom, boardroom, and deliberation chamber of the national assembly. There is a dichotomy between what they preach and what they practice. Many Muslims have lost themselves in “perfecting” their rituals, thinking that such attention will miraculously lead to their unity and deliverance from oppression, tyranny, dislocation, and humiliation. While important, rituals alone cannot substitute for the pristine principles that will lead to the building of *taqwá* and developing of an Islamic

personality. Social justice happens when its proponents deal with the unique problems and obstacles that attend the diminution of justice in society, not when they get together for Fajr and then routinely go and bury their heads in the ground, especially as it concerns, for instance, taking a stand against “Muslim” governments and their court clergy goading their citizens to murder their own in other countries for political objectives that are more consistent with expanding the imperialist and Zionist empire than with Islam liberating the oppressed.

In this *sūrah*, Allah (ﷻ) guides the discerning Muslim toward implementing divine justice by building the proper Islamic personality. It begins with proper nutrition (eating the right foods, meats, etc.), suitable marriage partners, and purification through *wuḍūʿ* and *ṣalāh*. These lead to the kind of emotional, psychological, intellectual, physiological, and spiritual balance that is necessary to adjudicate justice in society. Allah (ﷻ) warns us that those who break their pledge with Him will have to endure diaspora as a punishment and that covenant responsibilities will be given to someone else. Such punishments, even diaspora, are meant to preserve the sanctity of a just social order whose imperative is social justice, and regardless of how severe they may seem, they pale in comparison to the severity of having to adjust to the insecurity that attends the loss of such an order.

In this ninth volume of the multi-volume *tafsīr* series, Imam Muḥammad al-ʿĀṣī has dealt with only the first 40 *āyāt* of *Sūrah al-Māʿidah*. These *āyāt* relate to important injunctions requiring detailed treatment, and hence the explanations here enable readers to understand the divine commands with the motivation to go out there and make some changes. Those readers that have followed the *tafsīr* series thus far would appreciate the depth of treatment accorded to the Qurʾānic *āyāt* herein. Imam al-ʿĀṣī has taken special care to link the divine commands to today’s reality and identify the present-day covenant violators and oppressors.

As with previous volumes, Br. Afeef Khan has been intimately involved with editing work to make the text more readily accessible to the average reader. Detailed endnotes have been provided to

enable the more scholarly to satiate their thirst for knowledge and to pursue their research activities with ease. Many thanks are also due to Br. Imran Khan and Sr. Marjan Asi in providing timely and expeditious proofreading of the many pages in this volume. As with the other volumes, an electronic version of this ninth volume is available for reading or download on the ICIT digital library (www.icit-digital.org); and a hard copy is available through ICIT directly or through various on-line book retailers.

We pray to Allah (ﷻ) to accept this humble effort and to make it a source of guidance and understanding so that Muslims can appreciate the noble Book of Allah (ﷻ) in the way it was intended. We recognize that the task we have embarked on is difficult, indeed monumental. The road ahead is full of hazards but we have set out with sincere intentions and a firm conviction, and are thereby confident and secure in the knowledge that Allah (ﷻ) in His infinite mercy will provide the means to enable us to take it to fruition. We thank the many readers who have given and continue to provide input and support for this *tafsīr*. Similarly, we thank all those who have helped in whatever way to make this project a reality. Their reward is with Allah (ﷻ). May He, the Most Merciful Lord and Sustainer, multiply their contributions many times over. *Āmīn*.

Zafar Bangash

Director, Institute of Contemporary Islamic Thought (ICIT)

Toronto, Ontario, Canada

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List of Honorifics

Honorifics are the words expressed by every Muslim when the name of Allah (ﷻ), the name of the Prophet (ﷺ), and the names of Allah's previous Prophets (ﷺ) are mentioned, spoken, or written. These are placed in parentheses after the name of each of the above is expressed. They are known to nearly every Muslim; however as this is an English-language *tafsīr* meant for a largely English-speaking audience that may have little experience with this kind of Islamic etiquette, the list below identifies the ones used throughout this volume, along with their meanings and specific usages.



subhānahu wa-ta'ālā (Exalted and August is He): used for Allah alone.



ṣallā allāhu 'alayhi wa-ālihi wa-sallam (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family): used for Muhammad in any and all of his designations, such as *Messenger of Allah*, *the Prophet*, *the Messenger*, *Rasūl-Allah*, etc.



'alayhi al-salām (peace be upon him): used for every other prophet; masculine singular.



'alayhim al-salām (peace be upon them): used for all other prophets; inclusive plural, masculine and feminine.



'alayhā al-salām (peace be upon her): used for Eve, the wife of Adam, and for Mary, the mother of Jesus, among others; feminine singular.



'alayhimā al-salām (peace be upon them both): used for any combination of two prophets, for Adam and Eve, or for Mary and Jesus together; inclusive dual, masculine and feminine.

Transliteration Chart

Consonants

أ	none (initial)	ض	ḍ
ؤ	' (medial or final)	ط	ṭ
ب	b	ظ	ẓ
ت	t	ع	‘
ث	th	غ	gh
ج	j	ف	f
ح	ḥ	ق	q
خ	kh	ك	k
د	d	ل	l
ذ	dh	م	m
ر	r	ن	n
ز	z	ه	h
س	s	ة	ḥ
ش	sh	و	w
ص	ṣ	ي	y

Vowels and Diphthongs

□	a	ا□	ā	□ى	á
□ُ	u	آ□	ā	□ئى	ay
□ِ	i	□و	ū	□ؤ	aw
		□ى	ī		

The small box in the table above represents an Arabic consonant; for instance, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table would assume the following configuration,

ف□	fa	فَآ	fā	فَئى	fá
ف□ُ	fu	فَآ	fā	فَئى	fay
ف□ِ	fi	فُؤ	fū	فُؤ	faw
		فِئى	fī		

Tanwīn and Tashdīd

□ْ	an	□َّى	ayy	□َّو	aww
□َّى	an	□َّو	ūw	فَّ	ff
□̣	un	□َّى	īy (medial)	شَّ	shsh
□̣	in	□َّى	ī (final)	رَّ	rr

Similarly, if the box were replaced with the letter *f* (ف), then the table above would look like the following,

فَآ	fan	فَئى	fayy	فَؤ	faww
فَئى	fan	فُؤ	fūw	فَّ	ff
فُؤ	fun	فِئى	fīy (medial)	شَّ	shsh
فِئى	fin	فِئى	fī (final)	رَّ	rr

5

Sūrah al-Mā'idah, Part 1

The Tablespread

Sūrah al-Mā'idah is the fifth chapter in the Qur'an. As the overwhelming majority of the *āyāt* of this *sūrah* were revealed by Allah (ﷻ) to Muhammad (ﷺ) in Madinah after the Hijrah, *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* is considered to be a Madinan *sūrah*, even if a small proportion of the revelation occurred in the last year of his life, in which he spent some time in Makkah. In this regard, the Ṣaḥīḥ narratives (collections of prophetic hadiths) suggest that one *āyah* from this *sūrah* was revealed in the last year of the Prophet's (ﷺ) earthly life, while he was in Makkah. According to 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, the *āyah*, "**Today I have brought your *dīn* to perfection...**" (5:3), was revealed on the eve of the Day of 'Arafah, which happened to be on a *jumu'ah* during the Prophet's (ﷺ) Farewell Pilgrimage (Ḥajjah al-Wadā').¹

The transition from the end of *Sūrah al-Nisā'* to the beginning of this *sūrah* is found in the fiduciary obligation of being fair and just in the distribution of inheritance assets and the exhortation to honor contracts that broadly define the rights and responsibilities of relationships between people. The expression of this common

theme of “contracts” in *Sūrah al-Nisā'* relates to men and women honoring their marriage contracts and vows; their accord or mutual agreement contracts; and their security contracts with others. Also included are implicit forms of contractual obligation such as complying with the terms of the inheritance will, discharging any trusts, and carrying out the authorization to represent and advocate for others (power of attorney), which collectively fall within the purview of the *āyah*, “**Verily, Allah orders you to discharge your trustful relationship to others by allocating it to those who qualify...**” (4:58). The opening *āyāt* of *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* follow with inducements for man to honor the binding agreements that are outlined in both *sūrah*s. Another complementary feature between the two *sūrah*s is that *al-Nisā'* begins with “**Yā ayyuhā al-nās: O people!**” while *al-Mā'idah* begins with “**Yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū: O you who are securely committed [to Allah]!**” The former behooves the Makkan *sūrah* whereas the latter is befitting of a Madinan one.

The common denominator of *Sūrah al-Baqarah* and *Āl 'Imrān* is a declaration of Allah’s (ﷻ) oneness and the historical integrity of prophethood. The shared attributes of *Sūrah al-Nisā'* and *al-Mā'idah* focus on judicial and legal details.

The general ambiance of *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* situates the reader on a line of reasoning or logical argument against the Yahūd and Naṣārā. Anyone who has read the Qur’an to this point realizes the proxy relationship between political Christians and Jews (imperialists and Zionists) on the one hand and *mushriks* and *munāfiqs* within the Islamic domain on the other. Hence it ought to come as no surprise that any arguments against the former would be punctuated with references to these “allegiance shifters” — *munāfiqs* — and the diehard enemies of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) — *mushriks*. The extensive treatment of these subjects in *Sūrah al-Nisā'* and *al-Mā'idah* contributes to their correlative and interactional content. Interspersed in their *āyāt* are citations of practical injunctions pertaining to devotional acts as well as delineations of the *ḥalāl* from the *ḥarām*. In one of the two *sūrah*s there is a mention of *tayammum* (the substitute for the ritual washing), whereas in the other, of *wuḍū'*

(ritual washing) itself. In *Sūrah al-Nisā'*, divine permission was given to committed Muslim men and women to join each other in marriage. In this *sūrah* morally fortified women from people of scripture are added to the category of legitimate and lawful mates for Muslim men. This commendation in *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* rounds out the subject of *nikāḥ* (marriage), which began in *al-Nisā'*. Another common feature in these two *sūrahs* is an order from on high to be vigilant and vigorous in pursuing justice and fairness, and to bear witness to equity and equality without any prejudice or bigotry. And all of these exhortations and commands are laced with the salient and ever-present feature of *taqwā* (taking into consideration Allah's (ﷻ) power presence and corrective justice in social and behavioral matters).

While *Sūrah al-Nisā'* upped the ante in discouraging and deterring people from consuming intoxicants, alcohol, and habit-forming substances, it is the *āyāt* of *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* that finally ban such consumption, ingestion, and injection. The general subject matter of *Sūrah al-Nisā'* concentrates on values and laws that pertain to women, inheritance, and rules of military engagement and warfare. What distinguishes *al-Mā'idah* from *al-Nisā'* are the *āyāt* concerning the legality of certain types of food and animals hunted for food; the *āyāt* referring to *iḥrām* (the inspirational and hallowed status); the *āyāt* on how to deal with aggressors and mobile criminals; and the *āyāt* relevant to the punishment for thieves and the absolution for a false vow.

Contextual Overview

The *sūrah*'s name, *al-Mā'idah* (the Tablespread), comes from reference to the narration of a tablespread from heaven after the disciples of Jesus (ﷺ) asked for it — yet another miracle among the numerous others performed during the lifetime of Jesus (ﷺ). This story was related to authenticate the genuineness of Jesus' (ﷺ) prophethood, and moreover, to be a celebration and festival for his committed followers. It is also known as *Sūrah al-'Uqūd* (the Chapter on Contracts) and *Sūrah al-Munqidhah* (the Rescuer). It is reported that Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) said, "*Sūrah al-Mā'idah* is referred

to in the dominion of Allah as *al-Munqidhah* [the Rescuer],” as it will rescue its adherent from the clutches of Hell’s angels.”²

It is related that Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) recited *Sūrah al-Mā’idah* during his Farewell Pilgrimage, thereupon saying, “O People! *Sūrah al-Mā’idah* is the last to have been sent down [to us]. Honor its wholesome values and laws (*ḥalāl*) and interdict what it says are evil and unlawful (*ḥarām*).”³ He is also reported to have said, “The last *sūrah*s to be imparted [from on high] are *al-Mā’idah* and *al-Fath*.”⁴

Sūrah al-Mā’idah includes legislative material and three stories. The legislative material concerns contracts, marriage to women belonging to people of previous scripture, and the “living will.” Also registered are divine statutes on slaughtered and hunted animals, as well as on animal hunting during the state of *iḥrām* and its legal repercussions;⁵ guidelines touching on issues of ritual cleanliness (*ṭahārah*): *wuḍū’*, *ghusl*, and *tayammum* (ablution, full bath, and surface soil as a substitute for water); laws that prohibit the consumption of liquor (alcohol), intoxicating substances, and habit-forming drugs; punitive measures related to theft and highway banditry; and a penalty for taking a false oath or affidavit (*kaffārah al-yamīn*). Finally, what it means to annul or abandon the scriptural injunctions entrusted to humanity is discussed.

Early scholars who closely analyzed the contents of *al-Mā’idah* commented that in it are 18 obligations found nowhere else:

1. “[Forbidden to you is] ...the animal that has been strangled...” (5:3);
2. “[Forbidden to you is] ...or beaten to death...” (5:3);
3. “[Forbidden to you is] ...or killed by a fall...” (5:3);
4. “[Forbidden to you is] ...or gored to death...” (5:3);
5. “[Forbidden to you is] ...or savaged by a beast of prey...” (5:3);
6. “[Forbidden to you is] ... and all that has been slaughtered on idolatrous altars...” (5:3);
7. “[Forbidden to you is] ...and [you are forbidden] to learn through divination...” (5:3);
8. “And as for the hunting animals that you train by imparting to them some of your knowledge...” (5:4);

9. "...and the food of those who have been vouchsafed revelation aforetime..." (5:5);
10. "...women from among those who have been vouchsafed revelation before your time..." (5:5) — the first 10 of these, above, pertain to an appetite, a compulsion, or an obsession, such as with food, women, or gambling;
11. The physical/ritual cleanliness that precedes the *ṣalāh*: "O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! When you are about to pray..." (5:6);
12. "Now as for the man who steals and the woman who steals..." (5:38);
13. "O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Kill no game while you are in the state of pilgrimage..." (5:95);
14. "...and whoever of you kills it intentionally, [shall make] amends in cattle equivalent to what he has killed — with two persons of probity giving their judgement thereon — to be brought as an offering to the Ka'bah..." (5:95);
15. "...or else he may atone for his sin by feeding the needy, or by the equivalent thereof in fasting: [this], in order that he taste the full gravity of his deed, [while] Allah shall have effaced the past..." (5:95);
16. "But whoever does it again, Allah will inflict His retribution on him: for Allah is almighty, an avenger of evil" (5:95);
17. "It is not of Allah's ordaining that certain kinds of cattle [*baḥīrah*, *sā'ibah*, *waṣīlah*, *ḥām*] should be marked out by superstition and set aside from the use of man..." (5:103);
18. "Let there be witnesses to what you do when death approaches you..." (5:106).

Al-Qurṭubī added a 19th obligation, which can be ascertained from the *āyah*, "...for, when you call to *ṣalāh*..." (5:58).⁶ There is no mention in the Qur'an of a call to *ṣalāh* (*adhān*) except here; in *Sūrah al-Jumu'ah* there is a reference to a call for *Ṣalāh al-Jumu'ah*, but not to *ṣalāh* in general as is the case here.

In a more comprehensive sense, *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* states the unequivocal fact that Allah's (ﷻ) *dīn* — that is, Islam — has been

completed and perfected; even though the legal systems of revelation preceding it may have differed with it in some details, there is no conflict in the essence and the gist of it. The Prophet's (ﷺ) mission was to communicate and cement this *dīn* by engaging the human will and remaking human society according to the revealed word of Allah (ﷻ).

The outstanding feature of committed Muslims is their determination to fashion their own selves according to Allah's (ﷻ) directives; the deviation of others will not hurt them as long as they maintain a working relationship with and for Allah (ﷻ), they honor their word and contracts with others, they shun initiating hostilities against others, and they cooperate for the general good by insisting on virtue and the awareness of Allah's (ﷻ) power presence in human affairs as well as His corrective measures in human societies. Committed Muslims are not permitted to have an alliance with or an allegiance to those who deny Allah (ﷻ). Rather, they are pressed to stand for justice and be its witnesses, and hence when the responsibility to rule is given to them, they are required to discharge it with justice and equality among all people, Muslim and non-Muslim alike.

Dietary laws are integral to a healthy soul and a healthy society. In this regard, it should not be surprising that liquor, distilled spirits, and certain fermented, habit-forming substances are declared to be illegal and unlawful. Similarly, entertaining superstitions, gambling, and other addictive behaviors of vice are henceforth proscribed. Committed Muslims should walk through life on a course of truth and truthfulness, even if they encounter difficulties in their determination to maintain their commitment, especially from those quarters whose public proclamations of standing up for what is right are contradicted by their political and military animus toward the Muslims. These two-faced "justice-seekers" are the ones Allah (ﷻ) will ultimately judge in the world to come, revealing who they really were in this world.

The three stories in the *sūrah*, alluded to earlier, are concerned with what can be learned from seminal incidents that occurred in the lives of previous Prophets (ﷺ):

1. the story of Banū Isrā'īl with Moses (ﷺ) when they said to him, **“Go you and your Sustainer and fight; we shall remain stationary...”** (5:24);
2. the story of Adam's (ﷺ) two sons, Qābīl and Hābīl (Cain and Abel), in which the former kills the latter, representing the first crime on earth; and
3. the story of the Repast, which was a miracle performed by Jesus (ﷺ) in the presence of his companions and disciples.

This *sūrah* is the fourth increment in the set of opening *sūrahs* that together elucidate a long, drawn-out struggle — the purposeful lifetime spent toward constituting an *ummaḥ*, organizing a government, and consolidating a society. All this has to be done on the basis of a well-defined conception, a well-understood position, and a well-implemented “religious doctrine.” The overarching and unequivocal fact of this human movement in its Islamic mode is to demonstrate Allah's (ﷻ) will on earth by acknowledging His divinity, accepting His authority, consenting to His supremacy, and fulfilling His testament. This would mean that human society will have to procure its value system and legal system, as well as its standards and criteria from Allah (ﷻ) — and from Him alone.

Key choices, such as these, are fundamental because they are expected to shape subsequent choices and behaviors. Therefore, this means that materialistic pulses would have to be spurned, that earthly priorities would have to be sidelined, and that mundane obsessions would not be the substance of preoccupation in this scriptural and “God-based” world of tomorrow. The God-given truth would dominate through a popular base that carries this heavenly assignment. To this end, all misconceptions and fabrications about God, His Prophets (ﷺ), His angels, His scriptures, and the Final Day — all such false statements and erroneous ideas — would also be disassembled and deconstructed.

It is going to take a mountain of confidence to embark on this long-term objective. And the Islamic vanguard, bolstered by the popular will of the Islamic public, will have to jointly realize that its task and responsibility toward this end places it in a leading posi-

tion, which by its very nature will not immediately be attended by advocates and supporters. In fact, at its inception, the nascent Islamic movement in this mold will have fewer friends than ferocious and bloodlusting enemies. But the task has to be done; and the committed Muslims may rely on Allah (ﷻ) to pull them through difficult times.

This *sūrah* makes consequential references to communion with Allah (ﷻ) — *ṣalāh* — through which the soul gains its crystallization and the mind its insight. As everyone in this milieu, individually as well as collectively, is tightly attached to Allah (ﷻ), it is only natural to expect that a communion done in public is consistent with the expression of Islamic group consciousness. Hence the *āyāt* of *Sūrah al-Mā'idah*, indicate that a public communion with Allah (ﷻ) accrues more merits than a personal one, and that the magnitude of the beneficial impact on society is congruent to the number of participants — the more the better. The *sūrah* is marked with social norms and transnational arrangements in an atmosphere that socializes the soul and spiritualizes society. A lesson in dietary laws leads to a lesson in international laws. Would that today's world could recapture the integrity and uniformity of this Scripture of salvation that does not idealize "God" into a theory or idolize "God" into a substance!

It is not enough to know these facts. Humans were not meant to know facts and be satisfied with their abstract knowledge. Muslims who have taken their "humanity" a step forward in light of what Allah (ﷻ) has given them must put this knowledge to work. By bringing their knowledge of "social laws," and of Allah's (ﷻ) will into their societies they seek to dispel all other insufficient and sparse knowledge from the realm of human societies and their relationship with God, first and foremost, and then as a consequence, from the realm of human societies in their relationship with each other.

Allah (ﷻ) will not take people to task for their scientific discoveries; to the contrary such feats are considered to be virtuous and commendable. However, it is the assimilation of these scientific discoveries into man's social system that becomes problematic. If man happens to belong to an exploitative and oppressive social sys-

tem, no number of scientific discoveries, technological breakthroughs, or development and research is going to give him a society in the image of God's scripture. It has never happened before and it can never happen going forward. That is why man is instructed in this *sūrah* to put his knowledge of Allah (ﷻ), as expressed in this unfailing Qur'an, into motion so that he can take command of his social direction. He cannot remain at the mercy of "executive gods" whose decisions and policies are moving the planet in the direction of destruction and possible annihilation. At the helm of this "social responsibility" is judging, ruling, and governing in accordance with and in fulfillment of what Allah (ﷻ) has revealed. Those who refuse to accept this responsibility, as weighty as it is, are *kāfirs*, *ẓālims*, and *fāsiqs* (deniers of God, oppressors of society, and self-degenerates).

This is the fact that shines throughout this *sūrah*. People (organic human beings) are going to have to understand that they have to step up to the plate and assume their God-given role. This divine assignment is not for toadies, flunkeys, and cowards. A fervent soul-deep relationship with Allah (ﷻ) moves a person out of his individuality and into feeling for others. This empathy for those who are in poverty, deprivation, illiteracy, oppression, and displacement forces a person to ask Allah (ﷻ) for a solution to what has now become *his* problem — a problem he came to "own" because his awareness of it was impelled by this intimate relationship with Allah (ﷻ).

Upon deeper examination and reflection, this man of God realizes that many of these problems, if not all of them, arise because man mistreats fellow man. And man justifies and rationalizes that mistreatment and oppression by virtue of philosophies and ideologies he himself generates. Man has demonstrated the capacity to be self-absorbed, cruel, unfeeling, and uncharitable because he has abandoned in his thinking mind and in his caring heart the Creator and the Lawmaker. Man, in this state of self-established structural oppression, no longer refers to the scripture of Allah (ﷻ) for guidance. He even may have dismissed God as his only authority on these matters.

The man of God who garners his feelings and thoughts from his relationship with Allah (ﷻ) cannot bottle up these “high feelings” and “sensitive thoughts” in a domain whose only element is his personal self. He has to move them into his larger self, that is, the society around him. When he takes this difficult but necessary step out of his personal comfort zone, he realizes that society itself has to be in a proper relationship with Allah (ﷻ). It has to affirm Allah (ﷻ) as the creator, and the owner of this life, existence, and world. Hence, consistent with this affirmation is acknowledging Allah’s (ﷻ) preminent position as the lawmaker, the lawgiver, and the only authority and reference for man in all his intra-social and inter-social affairs. In other words, man has to accept Allah (ﷻ) as He is the one who truly cares for fellow man. He has to accept Allah (ﷻ), the Scripture, and the Prophet (ﷺ) who are “a mercy to mankind.” God is rendered incomplete in the sphere of human activities when He is a god of values and not a god of laws, or when He is remembered in church and forgotten in court. This “marginalization” of God comes from a Judeo-Christian enclave that has institutionalized this false religion. Thank Allah (ﷻ) for this Qur’an that still has every word of His intact, uncontaminated, and refreshing. Allah is One. Allah is unique. Allah is singular. And Allah (ﷻ) is undivided. No duality, trinity, pantheism, or humanity can be accorded to Him. The Judeo-Christian enclave of false ideas about God is under assault in the following *āyāt*,

O followers of the Bible! Now there has come to you Our Apostle, to make clear to you much of what you have been concealing [from yourselves and from others] of the Bible, and to pardon much. Now there has come to you from Allah a light, and a clear divine Writ, through which Allah shows unto all that seek His goodly acceptance the paths leading to salvation and, by His grace, brings them out of the depths of darkness into the light and guides them onto a straight way.

Indeed, the truth [of Allah’s power] denies they who say, “Behold, Allah is the Christ, son of Mary.”

Say, "And who could have prevailed with Allah in any way had it been His will to destroy the Christ, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone who is on earth — all of them? For Allah's is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them; He creates what He wills: and Allah has the power to will anything!"

And [both] the Jews and the Christians say, "We are Allah's children, and His beloved ones." Say, "Why, then, does He cause you to suffer for your sins? No, you are but human beings of His creating. He forgives whom He wills, and He causes to suffer whom He wills: for Allah's is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and with Him is all journeys' end."

O followers of the Bible! Now, after a long time during which no apostles have appeared, there has come to you [this] Our Apostle to make [the truth] clear to you, lest you say, "No bearer of glad tidings has come to us, nor any warner"; for now there has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a warner — since Allah has the power to will anything (5:15-19).

Indeed, the truth [of Allah's power] denies they who say, "Behold, Allah is the Christ, son of Mary," seeing that the Christ [himself] said, "O Children of Israel! Conform to Allah [alone], who is my Sustainer as well as your Sustainer." Behold, whoever ascribes divinity to any being beside Allah, unto him will Allah deny Paradise, and his goal shall be the Fire; and such initiators of injustice will have none to support them!

Indeed, the truth [of Allah's power] denies those who say, "Behold, Allah is the third of a trinity," seeing that there is no deity whatever save the One God. And unless they desist from this their assertion, griev-

ous suffering is bound to befall such of them as are bent on denying the truth (5:72–73).

If we, as human beings, yield to the fact that Allah (ﷻ) is the only deity there is, that He is the only creator there is, and that He is the only owner there is, it should naturally follow in our God-endowed minds that He is the only lawgiver there is. It is an attribute of Allah (ﷻ) alone to tell humans — who are the ones in need of the truth — what is *ḥalāl* (lawful) and what is *ḥarām* (unlawful). The human realization and acceptance of this divine attribute induces our societies to develop and grow in a way that does not clash with the Will of Allah (ﷻ). Man honors himself when he understands that Allah (ﷻ) belongs in conscience, in church, in community, and in the cosmos as the initiator and maintainer of physical laws as well as social laws. Our lifetime presence in this world is to honor this attribute of Allah (ﷻ). This is the primordial pledge we acknowledged and professed before assuming this biological life on earth. We entered into a binding agreement with Allah (ﷻ) that we will honor Him as our authority, that we will live out our lives with Him as our sustainer, overlord, and power. In this context we read the following,

O you who are committed [to Allah]! Be true to your covenants! (5:1);

O you who are committed [to Allah]! Do not demean and violate the symbols set up by Allah, nor the sacred month [of pilgrimage], nor the garlanded offerings, nor those who flock to the Inviolable Temple seeking favor with their Sustainer and His goodly acceptance... (5:2);

And [always] remember the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon you, and the solemn pledge by which He bound you to Himself when you said, “We have heard, and we pay heed.” Hence, remain on guard of

Allah: verily, Allah has full knowledge of what is in the hearts [of men].

O you who are committed [to Allah]! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to Allah, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to guarding against Allah's [corrective power presence in human affairs]. And [still] maintain your guard with Allah: verily, Allah is aware of all that you do (5:7-8).

To give this contract-relationship its historical depth, to show the continuity of this God-given responsibility to man, and to provide a lesson in the on-again, off-again feature of human nature, the *āyāt* go into some detail about Banū Isrā'īl,

And, indeed, Allah accepted a [similar] solemn pledge from the Children of Israel when We caused twelve of their reconnoiterers to be sent [to Canaan as spies]. And Allah said, "Behold, I shall be with you! If you institute the *ṣalāh*, and institutionalize the *zakāh*, and commit yourselves to My apostles and aid them, and offer up to Allah a goodly loan, I will surely efface your bad deeds and bring you into gardens through which running waters flow. But he from among you who, after this, denies the truth [of Allah's power], will indeed have strayed from the right path.

Then, for having broken their solemn pledge, We rejected them and caused their hearts to harden — [so that now] they distort the meaning of the [revealed] words, taking them out of their context; and they have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind; and from all but a few of them you will always experience treachery. But pardon them, and forbear: verily, Allah loves the doers of good.

And [likewise], from those who say, “Behold, we are Christians,” We have accepted a solemn pledge: and they, too, have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind — wherefore We have given rise among them to enmity and hatred, [to last] until Resurrection Day; and in time Allah will cause them to understand what they have contrived (5:12–14).

The above Judeo-Christian failure to honor God as the sole law-maker and lawgiver in their societies is brought to the attention of the Muslims because now it is the Muslims who are expected to succeed where the others have failed. To demonstrate that this is a continuum, the recognition of Allah (ﷻ) as man’s sole authority began neither with the Muslims of the Muhammadi generation, nor from a paucity of previous knowledge on their part. As instructed from on high, the Muslims were assigned the task of moving the process forward, especially in the socio-political realm where people often defer to the laws of Allah’s (ﷻ) temporal rivals,

O you who are committed [to Allah’s power presence]!
Do not desecrate [and violate] Allah’s symbols, the sacred month, the garlanded offerings, those who flock to the Inviolable Temple seeking favor with their Sustainer... (5:2);

O you who are committed [to Allah’s power]! Do not prohibit the wholesome things of life that Allah has made lawful to you, and do not aggress... (5:87);

And obey Allah and obey the Messenger and be vigilant... (5:92);

Today I have perfected your *dīn*, and have bestowed on you the full measure of My privilege, and endorsed Islam as your *dīn*... (5:3).

Muslims Have Binding Obligations

The proof that we honor Allah (ﷻ) is in accepting Him as our highest authority and our only authority — without any rival authorities. This is an issue that occupies many pages in this *sūrah*, it may even be the crux of it. The secular world, led by Judeo-Christian Europe and America, has taken the lead in making God something less than the ultimate authority. Thus, Muslims have to understand, in the pulse of their commitment to Allah (ﷻ), that the governments in these territories will put up a nasty fight to impede the committed Muslims from re-establishing Allah's (ﷻ) authority on earth. Man-made laws that usually come from national interests, corporate monopolies, capitalist greed, and racist ideologies will never yield to the law of Allah (ﷻ). They will go down fighting and not recognize Allah as sovereign, Allah as authority, and Allah (ﷻ) as reference in the social and legal matters of man. As such, every faithful Muslim has to take stock of the fact that Islam and the Islamic Ummah will run into these diehard *kāfir* governments. The Islamic Ummah, once it is reconstituted, will have a global mission of justice on earth in the shades of this illuminating and intense Scripture.

We will see for ourselves how this *sūrah* unfolds with the rich experience that accompanied the first parallel implementation of this moral attitude and legal system in a Muhammadi Arabia, surrounded and infused with all types of opposition, resistance, and hostilities coming from the same sources that are around today. It was — and still is — a matter of conformity to Allah (ﷻ) to engage these inimical forces in a grand movement of Islam. This is what we bear witness to when we read and contextualize the events we become acquainted with throughout this *sūrah*.

As we do our homework and “sweat out these meanings” we sense that the *sūrah* itself must have been composed of different time frames extending from before the cease-fire of Ḥudaybiyah all the way to the last year of Muhammad's (ﷺ) prophetic mission, and hence the end of the Qur'anic dispensation that was revealed through his agency.⁷

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا أَوْفُوا بِالْعُقُودِ ؕ أُحِلَّتْ لَكُمْ بَهِيمَةُ الْأَنْعَامِ إِلَّا
 مَا يُتْلَى عَلَيْكُمْ غَيْرَ مُحِلِّي الصَّيْدِ وَأَنْتُمْ حُرْمٌ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يَحْكُمُ مَا يُرِيدُ ﴿١﴾

يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا لَا تُحِلُّوا شَعِيرَ اللَّهِ وَلَا الشَّهْرَ الْحَرَامَ وَلَا الْهَدَى
 وَلَا الْفُلَيْدَ وَلَا ءَامِينَ الْبَيْتِ الْحَرَامِ يَبْنِعُونَ فَضْلًا مِّن رَّبِّهِمْ وَرِضْوَانًا
 وَإِذَا حَلَلْتُمْ فَاصْطَادُوا وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ أَن صَدُّوكُمْ عَنِ
 الْمَسْجِدِ الْحَرَامِ أَن تَعْتَدُوا وَتَعَاوَنُوا عَلَى الْبِرِّ وَالتَّقْوَىٰ وَلَا نَعَاوَنُوا
 عَلَى الْإِثْمِ وَالْعُدْوَانِ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ شَدِيدُ الْعِقَابِ ﴿٢﴾ حُرِّمَتْ
 عَلَيْكُمُ الْمَيْتَةُ وَالدَّمُ وَلَحْمُ الْخِنزِيرِ وَمَا أُهْلَ لِغَيْرِ اللَّهِ بِهِ ؕ وَالْمُنْخَبِقَةُ
 وَالْمَوْفُوذَةُ وَالْمُتَرَدِّيَةُ وَالنَّطِيحَةُ وَمَا أَكَلَ السَّبْعُ إِلَّا مَا ذَكَّيْتُمْ وَمَا
 ذُبِحَ عَلَى التُّصَبِ وَأَن تَسْتَقْسِمُوا بِالْأَزْلَمِ ؕ ذَٰلِكُمْ فَسَقَ الْيَوْمَ يَٰٓسَ
 الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا مِن دِينِكُمْ فَلَا تَخْشَوْهُمْ وَاخْشَوْنَ الْيَوْمَ أَكْمَلْتُ لَكُمْ
 دِينَكُمْ وَأَتَمَمْتُ عَلَيْكُمْ نِعْمَتِي وَرَضِيْتُ لَكُمُ الْإِسْلَامَ دِينًا فَمَنِ
 اضْطُرَّ فِي مَخْصَةٍ غَيْرٍ مُّتَجَانِفٍ لِإِثْمٍ ۖ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ عَفُورٌ رَّحِيمٌ ﴿٣﴾

يَسْأَلُونَكَ مَاذَا أُحِلَّ لَهُمْ ۖ قُلْ أُحِلَّ لَكُمُ الطَّيِّبَاتُ ۚ وَمَا عَلَّمْتُم مِّن

الْجَوَارِحِ مُكَلِّبِينَ تُعَلِّمُونَهُنَّ مِمَّا عَلَّمَكُمُ اللَّهُ فَكُلُوا مِمَّا أَمْسَكَنَّ عَلَيْكُمْ
 وَادْكُرُوا اسْمَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْهِ وَأَنْقُوا اللَّهَ إِنَّ اللَّهَ سَرِيعُ الْحِسَابِ ﴿٤﴾ الْيَوْمَ
 أُحِلَّ لَكُمْ الطَّيِّبَاتُ وَطَعَامُ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِنَابَ حِلٌّ لَكُمْ وَطَعَامُكُمْ حِلٌّ
 لَهُمْ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الْمُؤْمِنَاتِ وَالْمُحْصَنَاتُ مِنَ الَّذِينَ أُوتُوا الْكِنَابَ مِنْ
 قَبْلِكُمْ إِذَا آتَيْتُمُوهُنَّ أُجُورَهُنَّ مُحْصِنِينَ غَيْرَ مُسَفِّحِينَ وَلَا
 مُتَّخِذِي أَخْدَانٍ وَمَنْ يَكْفُرْ بِالْآيَاتِ فَقَدْ حَبِطَ عَمَلُهُ وَهُوَ فِي
 الْآخِرَةِ مِنَ الْخَسِرِينَ ﴿٥﴾ يَتَأْتِيهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا إِذَا قُمْتُمْ إِلَى
 الصَّلَاةِ فَاعْسِلُوا وُجُوهَكُمْ وَأَيْدِيَكُمْ إِلَى الْمَرَافِقِ وَامْسَحُوا
 بِرُءُوسِكُمْ وَأَرْجُلَكُمْ إِلَى الْكَعْبَيْنِ وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ جُنُبًا فَاطَّهَّرُوا
 وَإِنْ كُنْتُمْ مَرْضَىٰ أَوْ عَلَىٰ سَفَرٍ أَوْ جَاءَ أَحَدٌ مِنْكُمْ مِنَ الْغَائِطِ أَوْ
 لَمَسْتُمُ النِّسَاءَ فَلَمْ تَجِدُوا مَاءً فَتَيَمَّمُوا صَعِيدًا طَيِّبًا فَامْسَحُوا
 بِوُجُوهِكُمْ وَأَيْدِيكُمْ مِنْهُ مَا يُرِيدُ اللَّهُ لِيَجْعَلَ عَلَيْكُمْ
 مِنْ حَرَجٍ وَلَكِنْ يُرِيدُ لِيُطَهِّرَكُمْ وَلِيُتِمَّ نِعْمَتَهُ عَلَيْكُمْ
 لَعَلَّكُمْ تَشْكُرُونَ ﴿٦﴾ وَادْكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ
 وَمِيثَقَهُ الَّذِي وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ

إِنَّ اللَّهَ عَلَيْهِ بَدَاتِ الصُّدُورِ ﴿٧﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا كُونُوا
 قَوْمِينَ لِلَّهِ شُهَدَاءَ بِالْقِسْطِ ۗ وَلَا يَجْرِمَنَّكُمْ شَنَاٰنُ قَوْمٍ عَلَىٰ
 ءَلَّا تَعْدِلُوا ۗ أَعْدِلُوا هُوَ أَقْرَبُ لِلتَّقْوَىٰ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ ۚ إِنَّ اللَّهَ
 خَبِيرٌ بِمَا تَعْمَلُونَ ﴿٨﴾ وَعَدَّ اللَّهُ الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا وَعَمِلُوا
 الصَّالِحَاتِ لَهُمْ مَغْفِرَةٌ وَأَجْرٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٩﴾ وَالَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا
 وَكَذَّبُوا بِآيَاتِنَا أُولَٰئِكَ أَصْحَابُ الْجَحِيمِ ﴿١٠﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا
 الَّذِينَ ءَامَنُوا اذْكُرُوا نِعْمَتَ اللَّهِ عَلَيْكُمْ ۖ إِذْ هُمْ قَوْمٌ أَن
 يَبْسُطُوا إِلَيْكُمْ أَيْدِيَهُمْ فَكَفَّ أَيْدِيَهُمْ عَنْكُمْ ۗ وَاتَّقُوا اللَّهَ
 وَعَلَى اللَّهِ فَلْيَتَوَكَّلِ الْمُؤْمِنُونَ ﴿١١﴾

- (5:1) O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Honor your covenants! Lawful to you is the [flesh of every] beast that feeds on plants, save what is mentioned to you [hereinafter]: but you are not allowed to hunt while you are in the state of pilgrimage. Behold, Allah ordains in accordance with His will.
- (5:2) O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Offend not against the symbols set up by Allah, nor against the sacred month [of pilgrimage], nor against the garlanded offerings, nor against those who flock to the Inviolable Temple, seeking favor with their Sustainer and His goodly acceptance; and [only] after your pilgrimage is over are you free to

hunt. And never let your hatred of people who would bar you from the Inviolable Masjid lead you into the sin of aggression, but rather help one another in furthering virtue and *taqwá*, and do not help one another in furthering delinquency and aggression; and remain conscious of Allah's [power presence]: for, behold, Allah is severe in retribution!⁸

- (5:3) Forbidden to you is carrion, and blood, and the flesh of swine, and that over which any name other than Allah's has been invoked, and the animal that has been strangled, or beaten to death, or killed by a fall, or gored to death, or savaged by a beast of prey, save that which you [yourselves] may have slaughtered while it was still alive; and [forbidden to you is] all that has been slaughtered on idolatrous altars. And [you are forbidden] to seek to learn through divination what the future may hold in store for you: this is sinful conduct. Today, those who are in denial of Allah have lost all hope of [your ever forsaking] your *dīn*: do not, then, hold them in awe, but stand in awe of Me! Today have I perfected your *dīn* for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your *dīn*. As for him, however, who is driven [to what is forbidden] by dire necessity and not by an inclination to sinning — behold, Allah is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (5:4) They will ask you [O Muhammad] as to what is lawful to them. Say, "Lawful to you are all the good things of life." And as for those hunting animals that you train by imparting to them something of the knowledge that Allah has imparted to yourselves, eat of what they seize [capture] for you, but mention Allah's name over it, and remain on guard concerning Allah's [corrective power]: verily, Allah is swift in reckoning.
- (5:5) Today, all the good things of life have been made lawful to you. And the food of those who have been vouchsafed revelation aforetime is lawful to you, and your food is lawful to them. And [lawful to you are], in wedlock, morally

fortified women from among those who are committed [to this divine Writ], and, in wedlock, morally fortified women from among those who have been vouchsafed revelation before your time — provided that you give them their dowers, taking them in honest wedlock, not in fornication, nor as secret love-companions. But as for him who rejects commitment [to Allah], in vain will be all his works: for in the life to come he shall be among the lost.

- (5:6) O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! When you are about to commune with Allah, wash your face, and your hands and arms up to the elbows, and pass your [wet] hands lightly over your head, and [wash/wipe] your feet up to the ankles. And if you are in a state requiring total ablution, purify yourselves. But if you are ill, or are traveling, or have just satisfied a want of nature, or have cohabited with a woman, and can find no water, then take resort to pure dust, passing therewith lightly over your face and your hands. Allah does not want to impose any hardship on you, but wants to make you pure, and to bestow upon you the full measure of His blessings, so that you might have cause to be grateful.
- (5:7) And [always] remember the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon you, and the solemn pledge by which He bound you to Himself when you said, “We have heard, and we pay heed.” Hence, remain on guard concerning Allah: verily, Allah has full knowledge of what is in the hearts [of men].
- (5:8) O you who are committed [to Allah]! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to Allah, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being conscious of Allah’s [corrective power]. And remain conscious of Allah’s [corrective power presence]: verily, Allah is aware of all that you do.
- (5:9) Allah has promised those who are committed to Him and do good works [that] theirs shall be forgiveness of sins, and a mighty reward;

- (5:10) Whereas they who are bent on denying [Him His power] and giving the lie to Our [power] manifestations [in human life], they are destined for the blazing fire.
- (5:11) O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Remember the blessings that Allah bestowed upon you when [hostile] people were about to lay hands on you and He stayed their hands from you. Remain, then, conscious of Allah's [staying power]: and in Allah let the committed Muslims place their trust (al-Mā'idah: 1–11).

The *sūrah* begins by calling on *al-ladhīna āmanū* — those who have committed themselves to Allah (ﷻ). Usually when He employs this expression, an assignment of sorts follows. This commonly requires a “group effort” or “teamwork.” Therefore, Allah (ﷻ) is telling a quality and quantity of committed Muslims to observe and abide by any contract they may have with other people and with Allah (ﷻ), “O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Honor your covenants!” These types of agreements and contracts are understood in the course of this growing relationship with Allah (ﷻ) as it expands into its social range and responsibilities. Once a base of committed Muslims comes together, it is expected to acclaim and hold dear the instructions coming from Allah (ﷻ). There are things to do and things not to do. There are licenses and there are prohibitions. There are constructive ideas and efforts and there are destructive ideas and efforts.

When people enter into a close relationship with Allah (ﷻ) they are expected to follow through and respect their commitments, covenants, and contracts. A quick summary of man's contracts in life would include the following: his contract with Allah (ﷻ), his alliance agreements, his business contracts, his share arrangements with other members of a particular program, purchase contracts, a marital contract, and affidavits. Any type of legally binding agreement undertaken by a Muslim(s) has to be fulfilled, honored, and executed. This applies equally to a marital vow between husband and wife or to a military treaty between hostile forces. A contract, for instance, may be an escrow (money or the

like held by a third party until certain conditions are fulfilled); it may also be a post-obit bond (a contract to repay a debt after the death of a person whose heir becomes the debtor). The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) is known to have said,

Muslims abide by their stipulations [or terms].⁹

Any stipulation [precondition] that has no basis in the Book of Allah is void, even if it is stated a hundred times.¹⁰

Whoever does a thing not compatible with our [overall Islamic] affair, then that thing is considered counterproductive.¹¹

Hence committed Muslims are by the meaning of this *āyah* expected to honor any “endorsement,” which is an amendment to a contract or other consensually agreed upon document; or any “rider,” that is, a clause added to a contract or other document with their participation and consent, and which does not violate the Scripture. All these types of covenants, compacts, written agreements between or among two or more parties, formal and explicit approvals, addendums and amendments, articles and provisos, and all other stipulations and considerations that have been enacted without force or coercion are binding on committed Muslims as long as there is no contradiction or contravention of the *‘aqidah* (key convictions), the *ṭariqah* (method), and the Shari’ah (Islamic legal code).

If it ever happens that a Muslim or Muslims enter into some type of contract that violates the word and spirit of Islam then it is not binding on them. There may be some contractual relationships that are null and void by Islamic standards. An example would be if a “Muslim” individual, office, or authority enters into a contract that requires him/it to support or finance a non-Islamic entity in pursuit of its non-Islamic “interests.”

When contracts between parties (individuals and/or associations) enhance the scriptural order or do not violate it, this *āyah* is telling committed Muslims to be honest and practical about what-

ever the nature of the contract is. A promissory agreement (containing, involving, or having the nature of a promise) between two or more persons that creates, modifies, or destroys a legal relation is binding when it does not profane the Qur'an and transgress the Sunnah. The Arabic word *'aql* (plural, *'uqūd*) in this *āyah* refers to an agreement, upon sufficient consideration, to do or not to do a particular thing. Such an agreement between two or more parties, a preliminary step of which is an offer by one and acceptance by the other(s), suggests a meeting of minds and concurrence in understanding of terms. It is a deliberate engagement between competent parties, upon a legal consideration, to do, or abstain from doing, some act. The contractual agreement further entails the subject matter being worthy of consideration, legal oversight, mutuality of agreement and mutuality of obligation, and terms that are clear and ascertainable, that is, neither vague nor uncertain.

In the context of a life defined by scripture (the Qur'an and the Prophet – ﷺ) there are wholesome things for human beings to do and unwholesome things for them to avoid as a matter of honoring their relationship and contract with Allah (ﷻ). Before going into the details of this *sūrah*, we are reminded of the “contractual” part of our relationship with Allah (ﷻ), and thereby with our own selves. When we think about the definition of a “contract” in one way we realize that we have “contracts” of sorts with Allah (ﷻ), with our inner selves, and with our society.

If we were to bypass “individual” or “one-on-one” contracts, which are dealt with extensively in the classical books of Islamic fiqh, and look at our “social contract,” we cannot escape a historical conclusion: not many people of knowledge and wisdom in our Islamic context have done their due diligence on “contracts” that give judges their right to judge and rulers their right to rule. This social contract with all its derivative contracts is important for us to understand in light of the overall ambience of this *sūrah*. It is this social contract — the “big picture” contract so to speak — that enables the average Muslims to figure out where everything else fits, such as the day-to-day *ḥalāl* and *ḥarām*, dietary regulations, proscription on toxic and habit-forming substances, how to

handle unwholesome and noxious marriages, etc. All these guidelines in the *āyāt* to follow are to be understood in light of our principal contract with Allah (ﷻ) and our social contract with ourselves. Placing the word “contract” within this scope expands its meaning from a simple “legalistic” term to encompass the honorary and promissory relationship between a God of authority and a humanity of humility.

Binding Obligation Begins by Yielding to Allah’s (ﷻ) Authority

Our first contract is to understand and then acquiesce to the reality that humanity is humble and subordinate vis-à-vis Allah’s (ﷻ) ascendancy, majesty, and potency. If this initial, essential, and imperative relationship is not acknowledged and acclaimed by Muslims and non-Muslims alike all other contracts become tentative and counterproductive.

Man’s subservience to Allah (ﷻ) is an affirmation of His authority. Asserting a divinity in heaven that is disconnected to His authority on earth is an “incomplete,” dysfunctional, and dangerous concept of God in the mind of man. In the rightful, formal, and lawful climate of this *sūrah*, man’s relationship with Allah (ﷻ) is “legally binding.” Man has to assume a constructive role in a productive and “industrious” world. He cannot do so without the light and information he needs, but cannot obtain, except from the highest source of knowledge and the most reliable channel of information.

Man’s life began with his initial mistake — his disobedience to Allah (ﷻ) — and the preference of his emotional whim to his rational wisdom,

And We said, “Descend, all of you, from it [Paradise].”

In time guidance will come to you [people] from Me, and for those who follow it they shall have no fear and have no grief. [But] those who deny Me and [try to] falsify My [power] manifestations, they are the companions of the Fire therein to dwell forever (2:38–39).

Man's socially responsible role on earth is contingent upon his not withholding and withdrawing from Allah's (ﷻ) guidance. Any management of social and spacio-temporal affairs away from this conscientious and rational relationship with Allah (ﷻ) amounts to, in the final analysis, a world of instability, tension, aggression, and war. In other words, man fails to live up to his status as Allah's (ﷻ) *khalifah* on earth. Besides this disarray in human affairs, the "social contracts" that are enacted by wayward human beings, who are themselves responsible for the chaos in their lives, become illegal and void. Thus, a social contract in light of the Qur'an and the Sunnah annuls other social contracts enacted in the middle of a materialistic night.

Human beings cannot plead ignorance here. All of us were privy in our primordial or prehistoric existence to the fact of human servitude and divine authority; in the words of Allah (ﷻ),

And whenever your Sustainer brings forth their offspring from the loins of the children of Adam, He [thus] calls upon them to bear witness about themselves, "Am I not your Sustainer?" — to which they answer, "Yes, indeed, we do bear witness thereto!" [Of this We remind you,] lest you say on the Day of Resurrection, "Verily, we were unaware of this"; or lest you say, "Verily, it was but our forefathers who, in times gone by, began to ascribe authority to other beings beside Allah, and we were but their late offspring — will You, then, destroy us for the doings of those revokers of covenants?" (7:172-173).

Some people will ask when and where this happened? How it happened? They will say they have no memory or recollection of such an event. And why would they if they (we) are only human? It is enough that Allah (ﷻ) tells man about this primal and eventful occurrence, which took place before he came into this form of life and this type of world.

We will learn as this *sūrah* progresses that there was, at one time, a contractual understanding between the Children of Israel and God. Despite all of the previous violations of their contract with God before the mission of Moses (ﷺ), they were repeatedly given more chances, and on this occasion as well, to get them to come to terms with the gravity of their commitment to God, a mountain was raised above them as if it were their shadow, which made them think it was going to fall on them, or in some sense turn into a catastrophe. As we go along, we will also see how these Israelis never learned their lesson as they persistently infringed upon their “deal” or “bargain” with God. They were to wind up with the same ominous and appalling consequences that befall any people or society when they renege and find “ways and means” to break out of their relationship with God.

Now we, the Muslims, are the newcomers to this contractual and transactional relationship with Allah (ﷻ). The course was set by that sanguine generation and pioneering society led by Muhammad (ﷺ) in Arabia, at a time when the prevalent materialistic societies were crumbling due to self-induced fatigue or were rotting away because all of their institutions and civil relationships were predicated only on an empirical view of reality. These honest-to-God Muslims around Muhammad (ﷺ) were in a fervent and avid relationship with Allah (ﷻ). It is this unflinching commitment to Allah as authority and Allah (ﷻ) as source of inspiration and motivation that made them honor their word with Him through the ups and downs of life; they were obeying Him even if that meant going through the hellfire of warfare or overcoming the seduction of their lusts and desires.

This covenant with Allah (ﷻ) was attended by its reinforcing derivative: *‘uqūd* (contracts). The Prophet (ﷺ) in his Islamic relocation from Makkah to Madinah entered into a contractual agreement with the tribal chiefs of Madinah in what became known as Bay‘ah al-‘Aqabaḥ al-Thānīyah (the Second ‘Aqabaḥ Pledge).¹² At Ḥudaybiyah, underneath a particular tree, a contractual undertaking, otherwise referred to as Bay‘ah al-Riḍwān, was enacted between the Prophet (ﷺ) and the movement-oriented Muslims.¹³

If man was to look at his relationship with Allah (ﷻ) in light of its being “legally binding” he would realize the most important element in this bond is the fact that He is man’s authority and that man is His attendant. All other “sub-contracts” having to do with the details of this relationship — transactions among people, organizing the affairs of life, and interpersonal arrangements meeting their scriptural standard — are a fulfillment of that major and overriding contract with Allah (ﷻ), who is man’s ultimate and final authority. Hence, our “commitment” to Allah (ﷻ), in a sense, has a contractual flavor to it. We commit ourselves to Him and in return He commits Himself to us. It is along these lines that whenever something has to be done, the form of address used by Allah (ﷻ) is, **“O you who are securely committed [to Allah]!”** And with all commitments come the expectation to deliver, **“O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Do honor your covenants!”**

This would mean that we — the committed Muslims — have to show appreciation for and honor (through active engagement) our part of the agreements we have with Allah (ﷻ) and with fellow human beings. We have obligations (*farā'id*) to discharge; and we have matters that are *ḥalāl* or *ḥarām* (lawful or unlawful) to abide by. Some of these take the form of “contracts” we have between and among us as human beings, societies, and states. Financial transactions, for instance, are always going on and committed Muslims are required to fulfill them, regardless of whether they are of a mundane or consequential nature, with dignity and sincerity.

In all the provisions and precautions Allah (ﷻ) has given to man to enable him to navigate his life on earth, there are countless things that are by nature wholesome and allowable, but conversely there are also things that are harmful and thus interdicted. Man is brought into this reference point by Allah’s (ﷻ) guiding words,

Lawful to you is the [flesh of every] beast that feeds on plants, except what is mentioned to you [hereinafter], but you are not allowed to hunt while you are in the

state of pilgrimage. Behold, Allah ordains in accordance with His will.

O you who are committed to Allah! Offend not against the emblems set up by Allah, nor against the consecrated month [of pilgrimage], nor against the garlanded offerings, nor against those who move as a group to the Impregnable Masjid, seeking favor with their Sustainer and His goodly acceptance; and [only] after your pilgrimage is over are you free to hunt.

And never let your spite of a people who would bar you from the Impregnable Masjid lead you into the sin of aggression, but rather help one another in furthering virtue and *taqwá*, and do not help one another in furthering delinquency and aggression; and remain vigilant concerning Allah's [power participation]: for, behold, Allah is severe in retribution.

Unlawful to you is carrion [offal], and blood, and the meat of pigs, and any [animal] over which any name other than Allah's has been invoked, and the animal that has been choked, or beaten to death, or killed by a fall, or gored to death, or savaged by a beast of prey, except that which you [yourselves] may have slaughtered while it was still alive; and [forbidden to you is] all that has been slaughtered on idolatrous altars.

And [you are forbidden] to seek to learn through divination what the future may hold in store for you: this is degenerate conduct.

Today, those who are in denial of Allah have lost all hope of [your ever forsaking] your *dīn*: do not, then, hold them in awe, but stand in awe of Me!

Today have I perfected your *dīn* for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your *dīn*. As for him, however, who is forced [to do what is forbidden] by dire necessity and not by an inclination to sinning, behold, Allah is much-forgiving, lenient (5:1-3).

Evident from the above *āyāt* are guidelines pertaining to what man can and cannot do as regards meat, places, times, and certain actions. All of these arrangements — what is permissible and what is prohibited — may be regarded as agreements or a compatibility of observations between an authoritative God and heedful humans. The human side is bound to Allah (ﷻ) by its commitment to Him and therefore has to fulfill its end of this well-grounded agreement. Our *īmān* in its very definition means that we consider Allah (ﷻ) to be the only source of information on what is right and what is wrong, what is good and what is bad, what is healthy and what is toxic, and what is lawful and what is unlawful. No wonder Allah (ﷻ) begins with, “*Yā ayyuhā al-ladhīna āmanū...*”

“Sanctioned for you is the [meat of every] beast that feeds on plants, excluding what is mentioned to you [hereafter]...” Human discoveries, human science, human cultures, and human cuisines are not the criteria that render foodstuffs edible or inedible. Rather, it is the informative word of Allah (ﷻ), which has not changed throughout the centuries, that is our reliable and undeniable reference. He says to us as a general rule: all plant-feeding animals are suitable for use as food. Hence, what are classified as herbivorous animals, as a general rule, are the normative base of edible animals. All animals that have been subjected to the conditions of *dhabḥ* (slaughter according to scriptural standards) along with game (animals that are hunted for food according to scriptural standards) are fit to be consumed as food by man. The exceptions to this rule will follow shortly. The important point to note here is that man knows what to eat and what not to eat because he has information from the Creator on this subject. He is man’s authority. And His word is final. Some categories of animals are not edible because of their biological nature and there are other categorizations of animals that render them inedible because of factors unrelated to the nature of the animals themselves, such as the “time or place frame” a Muslim happens to be in.

What is meant by the Qur’anic term *bahīmah al-an’ām*, used in the first *āyah* of the *sūrah*? *Bahīmah* simply means a form of life that has no intelligence or the ability to understand. The historical

experience of man so far has defined this form of life as four-legged animals and other similar beasts found on land and in the oceans. The designation *an'ām* refers literally to camels, cows, and sheep; by analogy, however, it could also be extended to include buffalos, goats, deer, and any other hooved and cud-chewing mammals that are from the same biological classification. This is the broad and general rule for eating meat. But then there are exceptions (meat that is not consumable), per the ensuing *āyāt*.

“But you are not allowed to hunt while you are in the state of pilgrimage.” This means that hunting itself is prohibited when a Muslim is in the state of *iḥrām* (a pilgrim’s consecrated ceremonial status preceding and during the Hajj or ‘Umrah in Makkah), whether he assumes the state in the performance of the major *ḥajj* (during the months of Dhū al-Qa‘daḥ, and Dhū al-Ḥijjaḥ, and al-Muḥarram), or in the performance of the ‘Umrah (the minor *ḥajj*) during the rest of the year. When a Muslim enters into the zone of *ḥajj*, major or minor, he is considered to have relieved himself of all the mundane and customary concerns of “making a living;” hence the proscription on hunting while in *iḥrām*.

Moreover, the vicinity of the Holy Sanctuary in Makkah is designated as a security zone: a *mathābah* (retreat) from fearfulness, insecurity, and danger. This means that no one may harm any other living being or be baneful in the vicinity of the holy precincts. Hence the entire area becomes a psychological and geographical zone for peace and comfort — an area conducive to life and not one that “defeats” life, an area where life comes together and feels its extension into the reality of the ultimate Life and Being (*al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm*). In this geographical area characterized by its distinctive features, everyone should feel free and secure, provided that the area is safeguarded and sustained by a committed Islamic constituency.

In giving the issue some thought, people hunt, in many cases, because they need to secure food, nutrition, and a livelihood for their families and loved ones. People eat meat because sometimes survival dictates it. But here, in Makkah, these considerations ought not to be what motivates human behavior. The necessities for survival and the essentials for a livelihood will have no bearing

on the pilgrims who are now in an area free of anxiety and fear; in Makkah, their incidental needs will be taken care of, so that they can concentrate on what they made the journey for. Makkah is the gateway to the serenity and security that contradicts slaughtering and hunting animals.

“Behold, Allah ordains in accordance with His will.” It is His will that carries the day. It is His fixed intent and purpose that reigns supreme. And it is His decree that cannot be overruled. Thus this collection of rules that come from Him preclude us limited humans from defining what Makkah stands for; we are in no position to tamper with its definition, and we cannot change His laws concerning it and concerning what is fit for human consumption. And because Allah (ﷻ) cares for us more than we care to acknowledge, He teaches us these valuable lessons, without which we definitely will suffer. In this vein, once again, Allah (ﷻ) turns to those who owe Him their commitment,

**O you who are in a firm manner committed [to Allah]!
Do not violate the emblems of Allah, nor the sanctified month [of pilgrimage], nor the garlanded offerings, nor those who move in a crowd to the Sacrosanct Masjid, seeking favor with their Sustainer and His goodly acceptance; and [only] after your pilgrimage is over are you free to hunt (5:2).**

What immediately comes to mind when Allah (ﷻ) says, **“Do not violate the emblems of Allah...”** are the visible symbols of the Hajj and ‘Umrah. There are “things that are off limits” during this time period, and they should not be breached. This whole set of rules during the pilgrimage, while the pilgrim is in a state of *iḥrām*, no longer applies after a Muslim offers his sacrifice at the end of this spiritual journey, having now exited from his *iḥrām*. Before that anxious end, no Muslim may desecrate the rules and laws of this journey to the sacred city (Makkah). Desecrating this atmosphere of holiness amounts to a vulgarity that profanes this relationship of honoring Allah (ﷻ) and His authority. The emblems at Hajj and

‘Umrah are the stations and obligations of duties and responsibilities that have been decreed by Allah (ﷻ).

“Nor the sacred month...” This is in reference to the months of Rajab, Dhū al-Qa‘dah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah, and al-Muḥarram — the so-called *al-ashhur al-ḥurum*. Wherever and whenever the committed Muslims happened to be a dominant power in the world, these months were considered to be durations of refuge, defense, and freedom from danger and injury. No other belief system, to this writer’s knowledge, has a “no-war zone” that is defined by time rather than place as is presented here in this Qur’an. In the Abrahamic tradition that fell into decay in Arabia, the pre-Islamic Arabians did honor the sanctity of these months, but in a manner that was subject to their political whims. At times, they, or certain “strongmen” amongst them, would issue a “religious edict” that made it possible for them to “delay” or “transfer” a sacred month into another month. And this deliberate obfuscation of the monthly sequence, or intercalation, could be carried forward, according to some of these traditions, into ensuing years. When the authoritative word of Allah (ﷻ) was revealed this Arabian “institution” was annulled by divine decree and by the rule of law. The fact is that Allah (ﷻ) has established for eternity the nature of this “no-war” sanctity during these months as He says in *Sūrah al-Tawbah*,

Behold, the number of months, as it would pertain to Allah, is twelve months [in a year], [laid down] by Allah’s decree on the day He created the heavens and the earth; [and] out of these [months] are four that are sanctified. This is the propellent *dīn* (9:36).

The tradition and institution of Arabians switching months is called in the words of the Qur’an *naṣī’*; and this *naṣī’* is an extra measure of *kufr*. The Islamic calendar is set by scripture and the fourth dimension in it has a fixed portion — four months out of 12, or one-third of the year — that is designated by Allah (ﷻ) as a time period of non-belligerence and peacefulness.

All this is the norm provided that the Muslims themselves are not attacked or the victims of aggression. If any hostility and warfare is launched against these peace-inclining Muslims then they have the right to respond accordingly. Muslims are not so dimwitted as to offer their enemies the opportunity to shield themselves behind “the sacred months” of the year. The concept of *al-ashhur al-ḥurum* (the sacred months) is general, inclusive, and universal. If it applies to Muslims it should apply to non-Muslims as well. And if non-Muslims cannot reciprocate this annual cycle of “standing down,” it is not binding on Muslims to disarm themselves, while they live in a neighborhood of antagonism and impending war. More pertinent to the mission of *al-ladhīna āmanū*, what this means is that committed Muslims with power and authority have a binding duty to take this peaceful concept and this peaceful security zone to the rest of the world so that other cultures and societies are motivated to extend the benefits of this practical peace into their institutions. Some of this territory about the sacred months was already covered in the *tafsīr* of *Sūrah al-Baqarah*.

Al-hady(u) are the sacrificial animals a pilgrim brings to or purchases at Makkah. During the last days of the Hajj or the ‘Umrah he sacrifices these animals there. By doing so he brings to an end his Hajj and ‘Umrah religious rites and divine services. This priority sacrificial animal, which may be a camel, a cow, or a sheep, is restricted from slaughtering except for the specific purpose of the Hajj sacrifice for which it was obtained. It can only be slaughtered on the Day of Sacrifice (Yawm al-Naḥr) at the end of the Hajj ceremony; and in the event of the ‘Umrah, on the last day of ‘Umrah. The pilgrim himself cannot partake or share in any of this animal’s meat, leather, hair, or fleece — not one iota of it may he claim. It all belongs to the poor, the needy, and the deprived.

The garlanded offerings (*al-qalā'id*) are the herbivorous animals whose owners have placed decorative collars (usually flowers or the like) around their necks as markers of distinction that these animals are set apart for a solemn rite. The garlanded animal is free to roam and feed until the time or place of the vow and consecration is attained; it cannot be butchered except and until the speci-

fied time and/or place for which it was dedicated arrive. As such, animals have been dedicated for a purpose; they may not be used short of that purpose or intention.

“[Offend not] against those who are in pursuit of the Sanctified Masjid, seeking privilege with their Sustainer and His respectable approval.” Included in this category of people are individuals who go to the Sanctified Masjid (al-Masjid al-Ḥarām) and its vicinity for the purpose of conducting wholesome and above-board commercial activities while seeking the goodly acceptance of Allah (ﷻ). These persons, who do not necessarily have to be pilgrims, have been granted — by Allah (ﷻ) — assurance, confidence, safety, and security pertaining to their lives, their loved ones, and their livelihoods. Contrast this with the chains of regulations and the barriers of laws that have sealed off Makkah from the two billion Muslims of the world. There is an exclusionary system with a deadly intent to obstruct free access to and from Makkah contrary to and in defiance of what is expressed throughout the Qur’an and the Sunnah pertaining to the very nature of Makkah as an open city to all Muslims from around the world at any time of the year — for Hajj, for ‘Umrah, for trade, and for peace and tranquility.

Once the period of *iḥrām* is over, Muslims are permitted to hunt outside the area of the Sanctified Masjid. Within that area it is against scriptural law to do so, **“...and only after your pilgrimage is over are you free to hunt.”**

In addition to the annual “time-frame” security zone — the three consecutive lunar months of Dhū al-Qa‘dah, Dhū al-Ḥijjah, and al-Muḥarram, and the lone month of Rajab — there is a permanent security location: al-Bayt al-Ḥarām (the Inspirational Masjid). This is a breakthrough concept in the practical domain of what peace and security actually mean on the ground: times *and* places in which people, animals, birds, and even trees and plants are free from contentiousness, destruction, and defacement. These blocs of “times” and “places” are reserved for peace of mind as well as public security — that is, “when” and “where” unconditional peace permeates the air, characterizes society, and springs from the heart. It may all go back to Ibrāhīm (ﷺ), the progenitor of this

Ummah. In the Abrahamic paradigm, which was only being loosely adhered to by the pre-Islamic Arabians of the Muhammadi generation, the first month of the lunar year (al-Muḥarram), the seventh month (Rajab), and the last two months (Dhū al-Qa'dah and Dhū al-Ḥijjah) are periods of harmonious relations, freedom from dispute, and the absence of mental stress and anxiety. Similarly, the domicile of Ibrāhīm and Ismā'il (ﷺ), the area of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, and the urban center of Makkah are a district of safety, shelter, and sanctuary. All Muslims are obliged to see to it, as a binding commitment, that this area remains in this state and with this definition until the end of time.

This contract with Allah (ﷻ) is shredded in our generation by the rulers of Arabia. These rulers, the dynasty of Saud, have rendered Makkah as well as Jazīrah al-'Arab (the Peninsula of the Arabs) inaccessible to the billions of Muslims in the world. Besides that, they have offered Makkah and the Arabian Peninsula as a springboard for *kufr*, a military base for *mushriks*, and a rebound for Zionists.

These *āyāt* with their contractual nature place a godly task on the listening Muslims to rise to the occasion and revitalize the peaceful and peace-loving feature of Makkah. This has to be done in a spirit that is void of revenge and retaliation. In the time of the first Islamic society the parallels of the Saud dynasty represented by the power elites of Makkah repelled the committed Muslims from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, in particular during the year of the Ḥudaybiyah Pact. This left its emotional scars on the embattled Muslims, who, after all, were human beings; hence it was only natural for them to feel aggravation and resentment because they were prevented from access to Makkah and al-Bayt al-Ḥarām. But Muslims are expected to surmount their personal wounds and their immediate bitterness. Muslims are here for a higher purpose. They follow in the footsteps of their Prophet (ﷺ) and they follow the letter of their holy Book,

And never let your bitterness toward a people, who would bar you from the Inviolable Masjid, lead you

into the sin of aggression, but rather help one another in furthering virtue and *taqwá*, and do not help one another in furthering delinquency and aggression; and remain conscious of Allah's [power presence]: for, behold, Allah is severe in retribution (5:2).

This is true discipline. This is an Islamic force that is on a heavenly mission. This is a good example of how Muslims behave toward their enemies: they conquer their personal feelings of animus, which would lead others into indiscriminate bloodletting, in the process of conquering their public enemies. These are the Muslims who are the pacesetters for an otherwise wandering humanity. When other peoples have given up on their man-made authorities and their misleading governments, Muslims are expected to be pioneers because their authority is Allah (ﷻ), and no temporal authority can rival His program for mankind.

The liberation of Makkah today, as was the case yesterday, will require qualified Muslims who, as bitter as they may feel toward the Saudi kinship group, are able to unseat and dethrone them without vengefulness or malice. Deposing and evicting the Saudi rulers is an act of obeying Allah (ﷻ), the same as the *ṣalāh* and the *ḥaḳāh*, in the overall plan of Islamic momentum and reconstruction. This task begs a proper understanding of these *āyāt* and this Qur'an, followed by a qualified leadership of competent Muslims who are above and beyond all the propaganda and smokescreens that give the Saudi ruling class religious cover and fake political legitimacy. The Saud sacrilegious stock is as legitimate in Makkah and Arabia as were the Qurayshī occupiers of Makkah and the usurpers of the Ḥaram in the time and life of Muhammad (ﷺ).

The revitalization of these *āyāt* concerning the status of Makkah will give the world a new outlook. The final sacrifice of animals, with Allah's (ﷻ) leave, by the year-round stream of tens of millions of Muslims moving freely in and out of an open Makkah will substitute for, in the chain of life, the ultimate sacrifice of human life in the billions from starvation, disease, and poverty. All this is impossible now because Makkah has been strangled by

the suffocating interpretations of a “religious class” of pro-Saudi spiritual leaders who are satisfied with the status quo of Makkah and the status quo of a larger world from which Makkah is torn asunder. According to their “scholarly” reduction of Makkah and its visual symbols and stations, Makkah does not belong to the world at large, with the result that this world without a universal direction does not view Makkah as its capital city.

Muslims in the world today have all the right to be upset, to be angry, and to be agitated. But they do not have the permission to channel these emotions into a “tit-for-tat” rebound against the Saudi bloodline of rulers who should, more precisely, be ousted from their throne as an act of correction that sustains the moral standard belonging to Allah’s (ﷻ) subjects (*‘ibādullāh*), **“Rather help one another in furthering virtue and *taqwá*, and do not help one another in furthering guilt and hostilities...”** It takes a special kind of human being to rise above his personal aggravation and settle an issue like this on terms that will not generate more rancor and malice. This is the kind of person that can only be molded by this Qur’an and the Prophet (ﷺ).

If anti-Saudi Muslims become disposed to their personal feelings and internal malevolence they may justify linking up with any of the multitude of satanic forces (imperial, colonial, or Zionist) to bring down and force out of Makkah and Arabia the Saudi power clique. As important and central as it is to depose and dethrone these corrupt rulers we — the Muslims who are acculturated to this Qur’an — do not have the permission to justify any means just because of the noble end. Allah (ﷻ) trusts that we will embody the letter and the spirit of His words,

And never let your hatred of a people who would bar you from al-Masjid al-Ḥarām lead you into the sin of aggression, but rather support one another in furthering virtue and *taqwá* [by freeing al-Masjid al-Ḥarām], and do not support one another in furthering guilty feelings and aggression; and remain alert to Allah’s [power presence]: for, behold, Allah is severe in retribution (5:2).

When Muslims are in a military clash with their foes they should know that their ultimate support comes from Allah (ﷻ). Their standards, values, and criteria are here in this Book of Allah (ﷻ). And if they are not able to liberate themselves from their own prejudices they will not qualify in helping others to overcome their own. Despite all the evidence that has come to the surface about where Saudi loyalties lie, there are still some tribal types, some unnerved nationalists, as well as those pragmatic realists who do not want to purge Arabia of its current *mushrik* establishment. So what? The task is outlined and the mission remains to be accomplished irrespective of the number of social layers that have to be peeled away before Makkah finally reverts to its central role as the direction-setting venue for humanity.

Animals That are Proscribed for Human Consumption

The lesson then details the exceptions to the general rule of considering all livestock or “farm animals” *ḥalāl*.

Forbidden to you is dead meat, and blood, and the flesh of pig, and that over which any name other than Allah’s has been invoked, and the animal that has been choked, or beaten to death, or killed by a fall [from a high place], or gored to death, or savaged by a beast of prey, save those [animals] that you [yourselves] may have slaughtered while they were still alive; and [forbidden to you is] all that has been slaughtered on idolatrous altars.¹⁴

And [you are forbidden] to seek to learn through divination what the future may hold in store for you: this is degenerate [human conduct].

Today, those who are in denial of Allah [and His power] have lost all hope of [your ever forsaking] your *dīn*: do not, then, hold them in awe, but stand in awe of Me! Today have I perfected your *dīn* for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My bless-

ings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your *dīn* (5:3).

The rule of thumb is that all plant-eating animals are suitable for human consumption. The wording for this comprehensive axiom comes from the *āyah* above, “**Lawful to you is *bahīmah al-an‘ām*...**” (5:1). The word *an‘ām* in and of itself means cattle, domesticated animals, and land animals that do not feed on other land animals. But the word *bahīmah* — which linguistically means *lacking sense or understanding; dense, stout, and solid* — may be a further qualifier for *an‘ām*. Taking the linguistic meaning of *bahīmah* and placing it in an advanced and experienced mind that has looked at the physiology, biology, agriculture, and nutritional component of “meat” would probably end up trimming down the choices of meat available to man — provided the condition of poverty in the world is not chronic and spreading.

With this understanding, even though certain meats are a food approved for human consumption, the type and quality of the acceptable meat still has to be taken into consideration. Firstly, the meat that comes from the animals deemed edible by scripture are located in a world that is “natural.” This means they are not locked up and “fed” by companies that care more for profits than for health and nourishment. Before human beings found their lives located in industrial societies geared toward assembly-lineing the production of meat, animals grazed naturally and ate nutritious diets. The meat from these healthy animals provided an important source of complete protein, B vitamins, phosphorus, iron, sulfur, potassium, copper, and essential fatty acids.

Secondly, animals raised on today’s factory farms are fed a diet of grains rather than greens, and suffer from a complete lack of movement and exercise. This has a devastating effect on the animals’ health (and thereby the health of the people who consume them), drastically increasing the composition of unhealthy fats in the meat. The antibiotics routinely administered to cows, lambs, and chickens and other animals compromise the quality of meat and lower the consumer’s resistance to diseases. Growth-stimulat-

ing hormones injected into animals disturb human hormonal systems. Animals are sprayed with insecticides to control flies, and are given oral larvicide (an agent for killing larvae), which contain toxic organophosphates. In response to these and other issues, organically raised meat from grass-fed animals is now available and is the healthiest source of non-contaminated meat.

With all the abundant incentives in these *āyāt* for health consciousness and “life consciousness,” Muslims should be the foremost advocates of raising, slaughtering, and eating beef, mutton, and fowl fed a natural diet free of antibiotics and growth hormones. Similarly, per the extended meaning of these *āyāt*, the vast majority of sea animals are fit for human consumption. Wild fish, especially salmon, sardines, mackerel, and albacore tuna are among the richest sources of essential fatty acid derivatives that help people protect themselves against heart disease, cancer, and inflammatory disease. However, the same scriptural caveat applies to potential seafood. Fish and the like are suitable for human consumption when they are found in their natural state, that is, when the rivers, seas, and oceans are not the convenient dumping locales of waste, contaminants, and industrial runoff.

Knowing that these *āyāt* are referring to meat in its natural state, the Qur’an goes on to detail what is excluded from the list of *ḥalāl* meat. First comes the proscription against consuming carrion, blood, and pork. Carrion is the meat of a dead animal that, had it been slaughtered in accordance with scripture, would have been edible, but because it died and was not slaughtered is no longer edible. Blood is the major liquid that circulates through the bodies of animals, carrying nutrients to cells and organs as well as conveying away their waste products; it may also become congealed in the organs, which may make their way to man’s tablespread. And finally, pork is the naturally unhealthy meat of the hog or pig. The poisons, toxins, and pathologies in dead meat are an established scientific fact by now, and hence, a levelheaded person should be able to appreciate Allah’s (ﷻ) guidance in this regard. The same might have been said for blood, were it not for a plethora of exotic food, cooking, and naturalist shows on television that are now pop-

ularizing the consumption of fresh blood in the form of cocktails, sausage, and breakfast cakes. Having said this, the point of contention may still be concerning pork. The taste of pork to some people is so delicious that they become oblivious to some of the hard facts concerning this type of meat, which in reality is unhealthy, morbid, and even virulent.

Pork is the flesh of a pig or hog used for food. Together with beef, pork represents an important component of the standard Western diet. Annual US pork consumption, which is less than that of beef, is about 46 pounds/person. Consumption of both types of meat has declined in some places in the West (Europe and America) in the past 20 years, in part due to consumers' concerns about pork and pork products being high-fat, high-saturated fat and high-cholesterol foods.¹⁵ In a commercial response to the demands of the market, not necessarily one related to improving overall public health, breeders and farmers now produce hogs that yield pork with 30% lower fat content. Pork is divided into various cuts. Two-thirds of pork marketed in the United States is cured (the addition to meats of some combination of salt, sugar, nitrite and/or nitrate for the purposes of preservation, and retaining flavor and color) and smoked. Bacon refers to cured pork belly from the side of a hog after spare ribs have been removed. Canadian bacon represents cured pork loin, a less fatty alternative to bacon. Ham describes rear leg cuts of hog meat; most are sold fully cooked.

Traditionally considered a source of high-fat meat, hogs until recently have been bred to accumulate massive amounts of fat. A broiled pork chop is 63% fat, while a "lean" cut of a pork rib roast is 45.2% fat. Processed pork products include sausage and hot dogs, traditionally high-fat products.¹⁶ Pork fat (lard) is on a saturated par with beef fat (tallow). It is interesting to note that on a commercial versus health scale, unlike beef, there is no grading system for pork in the United States.

Bacon, which is almost a staple in the American breakfast, is cured by injecting brine into a pork belly; smoke flavor may also be injected or the bacon may be smoked after curing. Most hams are cured in brine. Pork legs are injected with a solution containing

salt, sodium nitrate, and sugar. Hams that are dry-cured are rubbed with a mixture of salt, sodium nitrite, sodium nitrate, and seasoning.¹⁷ Nitrite containing bacon, when fried, yields nitrosoamines, a family of nitrogen-containing, cancer-causing chemicals.¹⁸ Significant levels of nitrosoamines similarly appear in cooked sausage and cured meats. Specific nitrosoamines have caused cancer in all animals tested. Under conditions present in the stomach, nitrite also can react with amines found in protein-containing foods to form nitrosoamines. Population studies have linked nitrite intake to cancer. Though nitrites and nitrates come from vegetables, this does not necessarily lead to nitrosoamines because vitamin C and similar chemicals in the food block nitrosoamine formation. The American Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has approved the use of nitrites since they themselves do not cause cancer. Furthermore, vitamin C (ascorbic acid) or similar agents must be added to cured meats in order to reduce the risk of nitrosoamine formation. Due to consumer pressure, nitrite is now listed on food labels, and nitrite-free meat is becoming increasingly available in the West.

Lard, which is widely popular in some non-Islamic societies, is the fat released from the cooking and processing of pork; it is considered to be a saturated fat. One of the highest grades of lard is kettle-rendered lard, prepared from fat trimmings. Refined lard is bleached and “purified,” and has a mild flavor. Commercial lard contains added hydrogenated fat to increase its melting point and to make it firmer. To retard rancidity, antioxidants such as BHA14, BHT15, vitamin E, and propyl gallate are normally added.¹⁹ Like all fat, lard consumption provides 9 calories/gram. Lard consumption in the United States has steadily declined since 1950 from a yearly per capita consumption of 13 pounds to less than two pounds today. Lard is used commercially in processed foods such as baked beans, chili, baked goods like muffins, and refried beans. Vegetable shortening, which is prepared from hydrogenated cottonseed oil, peanut oil, soybean oil, or coconut oil, and mixtures of vegetable oils and some animal fat, has largely replaced home use of lard.²⁰

Besides the innate fattiness of pork and the way it is cured with nitrites, another threatening feature of pork consumption is

trichinosis, a disease caused by the parasitic worm, *Trichinella spiralis*, which can infect meat.²¹ Trichinosis remains an important disease affecting pork consumers in the United States and Latin America and results from ingesting infected, raw, or partially cooked pork. In addition to pigs, wild carnivorous animals such as bears may carry the parasite. Symptoms of trichinosis include fever, gastrointestinal upset, swelling of infected muscles, and severe muscular pain. An unusually high white cell count, recovery of larvae from blood, and immunologic tests are used for clinical diagnosis.

Some pork-eating advocates say that prevention is best achieved by thoroughly cooking pork to 137°F (58°C), or by freezing pork continuously for at least 20 days at or below 5°F (–15°C) or for 24 hours at 2°F (–17°C). They also say that the same precautions apply to bear meat. Smoking or salting meat does not necessarily destroy this parasite. Infection in pigs is said to be minimized by cooking all garbage and offal from slaughter houses used as food. For this reason, all states in the US have laws requiring that garbage (!) be cooked prior to feeding it to pigs.

In Asia, Africa, and Latin America, pork tapeworm (*Taenia solium*) infection is common.²² Microscopic tapeworm eggs follow an oral-fecal route of infection. Infection can be spread by eating food when infected food handlers do not wash their hands before meal preparation. The larvae infect the brain, causing inflammation and seizures. In the United States, infection most frequently appears in communities populated by recent pork-eating immigrants, for example, from Latin America. An immunologic test can detect parasite antibodies if present. Scrupulous hygienic practices and thorough cooking to avoid consumption of contaminated food are important parasiticidal measures.

The “scientific community,” short of scriptural insight and information, still says that the first line of defense against such tapeworms is careful evaluation of meat and fish by trained inspectors, who, due to drastic budget cuts in the US for almost all federal agencies other than the Departments of Defense and Homeland Security, are too few to regulate and check on most meat processing plants in the US. Cysts are visible in infected meat. Thorough cooking, such

that all cooked meat reaches more than 135°F, and prolonged freezing will kill cysts. For this reason, freshwater fish should not be served as sushi, and should only be eaten after it has been cooked, frozen, or cured. Smoking and drying do not kill cysts. A medical establishment having no light from Allah (ﷻ) prescribes a medication (praziquantel) for a person diagnosed with tapeworms.

Cysticercosis, an infection of pork tapeworm larvae, is the most common parasitic infection in the western hemisphere. After a person eats food contaminated with *Cysticercus* eggs, secretions in the stomach cause the eggs to hatch into larvae. The larvae enter the bloodstream and are distributed to all parts of the body, including the brain, where they can form cysts. The cysts degenerate and the larvae die, triggering inflammation, swelling, and neurologic symptoms, such as headaches, seizures, and sometimes weakness in certain muscles or pins-and-needles sensations in extremities like the fingers, toes, elbows, and knees. Cysticercosis is usually not treated unless it involves the brain, in which case antiparasitic drugs such as albendazole or praziquantel may be given along with corticosteroids, which help reduce inflammation.²³

Some of the aspects and discoveries pertaining to meat in general and to pork in particular that have become available in the “scientific community” are presented with a view to corroborate, insofar as this can be achieved with the human acquisition of knowledge, Allah’s (ﷻ) guidance, not with a view to “prove” it. Allah’s (ﷻ) word is the one that is final; it proves human knowledge, not the other way around. And so, when Allah (ﷻ) with His infinite knowledge informs us that dead meat, blood, and pork are not suitable for human consumption, we ought to recognize that they are harmful to our health and well-being in more ways than we are now cognizant of, and that many of these unknown problems are still awaiting our attention and discovery. We should respect the limitations of our minds, honor the infinite knowledge of Allah (ﷻ), and abide by these valuable and life-saving bits of information.

“...And [forbidden to you is] all [meat] that has been slaughtered on idolatrous altars.” This is one way of understanding and translating this portion of the *āyah*. Another way is to say

that all meat slaughtered for the sake or in the name of anyone besides Allah (ﷻ) is forbidden, which calls back to mind the justification for “animal slaughter.” The scriptural reasoning for slaughtering animals is the preservation of human life — done with the permission granted from Allah (ﷻ). If there is a “survival struggle” between the animal kingdom and the human family, the human family has to survive on the “chain of life” decreed by the Creator — Allah (ﷻ). The pointless and meaningless death of babies, children, men, and women in different regions of the world cannot be tolerated while the same world shows affection and love for certain types of animals. It is in this area of “human survival,” the dignity conferred on humans by Allah (ﷻ), and the license Allah (ﷻ) has given man that give him the right to slaughter animals. The validating expression of this worldview is the slaughter of animals at Makkah in the concluding day of Hajj or ‘Umrah to feed the foodless, the starving, and the malnourished. This is the context in which Muslims slaughter animals and eat them. Taking this further, it can be said that meat consumption is in a priority sense the right of the ill-fed and those who are dying of food deprivation. The further some people move away from this pool of needy people into the affluent segments of society, the less deserving they are of consuming meat.

In today’s world there is a meat industry that slaughters animals not to feed the hungry, nor for the purposes of offering survival for those who live on the borderlines between life and death, but rather to make money and net profits. Animal fodder for this industry undergoes a slaughtering process not sanctioned by Allah (ﷻ). The meat of animals slaughtered on the altars of greed and profiteering is inedible. Even if God’s name is verbally invoked on this type of meat at the moment the butcher’s knife slits the throat of the animal, the practical and motivational component of killing that animal is still commercial and profit-oriented. God is not in the psychology of the whole process that brought the animal to the slaughterhouse.

The invocation of Allah’s (ﷻ) name comes from a psychology, a mentality, and a society that regards its behaviors to be defined and motivated by Allah (ﷻ). So when the time to butcher an ani-

mal arrives, the name of Allah (ﷻ) is called down and put forward as an expression of the intents and purposes peculiar to a given action or deed — in this case the slaughtering of an animal for the sake of humans, or taking away an animal’s life to save a human life by the authority of Allah (ﷻ).

As for the “...animal that has been strangled, or beaten to death, or killed by a fall, or gored to death, or savaged by a beast of prey,” it is analogous to the dead animal. If it died without the “slaughtering process” that drains its tissues and organs (in other words its meat) from the blood, the residuals, the toxins, and the impurities that stay lodged in the body when there is no *dhabh* (ritual slaughter), then such an animal is not a suitable food for humans. The only time these animals may be edible is when a person gets to them before they actually die and slaughters them. A goat, for instance, may have suffered a fall off a cliff but did not immediately die, and if the shepherd has enough time to slaughter it before it expires from its fall, then this renders its meat edible. The same can be said about a strangled cow or a gored ram. If these animals die for reasons other than the *dhabh*, they are to be considered dead animals, “...save those animals that you [yourselves] may have slaughtered while they were still alive.”

Pertaining to meat, suggestions to the effect that there is a congruence between *halāl* and kosher (food satisfying the requirements of Jewish dietary law) are out there. This would be an opportune moment to look at some of the similarities and differences between kosher guidelines about permissible food and their Islamic analogs.²⁴ The body of Jewish dietary law, known as *kashruth*, defines the fitness and appropriateness of foods. Acceptable and unacceptable foods fall into three food groups:

1. *milchig* – dairy products and milk;
2. *fleishig* – meat, fowl, and products derived therefrom; and
3. *pareve* – foods that can be eaten with either milk or meat.

These neutral foods (*pareve*) are fruits, vegetables, grains, fish, and eggs. Acceptable fish have fins and scales; shellfish are excluded. Domestic fowl are permitted, as are animals with a cloven hoof that

chew their cud, a group inclusive of cattle, goats, sheep, and deer. Pigs (pork) are not acceptable. Convenience food is not kosher unless certified by rabbinical authority, signified by the name and insignia on the package.²⁵ Bread, which is normally a *pareve* food, must be baked by observant Jews under rabbinical supervision.

All meat and fowl must be sacrificed according to prescribed methods. Kosher slaughter involves the use of a sharp knife to quickly sever the carotid arteries, jugular veins, spinal column, and windpipe of a live animal by a trained slaughterer (*schochet*). Kosher slaughter of poultry must also be done by hand. Some Jews follow a stricter interpretation of rules concerning acceptability: *glatt kosher* meat means the organs, especially the lungs of kosher-killed animals, have been inspected for blemishes or defects. *Glatt kosher* meat must be soaked and salted within 72 hours of slaughter.

Grape juice and wine, traditionally used in Jewish religious ceremonies, must be prepared by observant Jews. To be kosher, grape juice must be properly separated and heated. If grape-flavored sodas with real fruit juice are not prepared in this way, the soda is not kosher. The Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America has published guidelines regarding the kosher status of food and beverage ingredients.

Jews who keep kosher may not eat insects. This poses a problem with regard to fresh produce, especially green, leafy vegetables, which may require inspection. Aphids (any of various small insects that feed by sucking sap from plants) are a common problem, and fresh produce from health-food stores and roadside outlets requires inspection.

The Passover holiday has additional kosher requirements extending over an eight-day period. Many products, kosher for the rest of the year, are not kosher for Passover. Leavened grain and related foodstuffs are avoided to commemorate the departure of the Children of Israel from Egypt. Legumes, corn, rice, and mustard are not eaten during Passover by Jews of European ancestry.

To separate meat and dairy, the kosher kitchen employs two sets of pots, pans, dishes, and utensils; table linen is also to be used separately for dairy and meat. To maintain segregation, the utensils

are washed and stored separately. *Pareve* foods can be prepared and eaten with either set. Currently, an estimated 500,000 families in the United States and perhaps 50,000 in Canada abide by kosher dietary laws. A few non-Jewish groups, such as the Seventh-Day Adventists and some Muslims, occasionally purchase specific kosher foods to meet their religious needs, and some consumers consider the kosher seal an indicator of quality.²⁶

There, however, is a major difference between the Islamic *dhabh* and the kosher slaughter of an edible animal. The latter requires the one-stroke, swift severance of the head from the body — that is, cutting through skin, flesh, veins, windpipe, the bone and the nerves running between the brain and the body (the central nervous system). This total detachment of the two parts of the body (head and torso) does indeed cause a drainage of blood from the animal's body and therefore from the meat that is to be consumed. The drainage is not maximal though; and that is why some Jews require the meat to be placed in salt, which acts as an astringent to draw out whatever may be left of blood or toxins in the meat. Therefore, the rationale for kosher — the draining of as much blood as possible from the final product, which is the meat on a person's plate — is sound.

In *dhabh* (Islamic slaughter), the laws of kosher apply except for the out-and-out severance of the central nervous system, which connects the brain to the rest of the body; this nerve nexus has to stay intact so that there is a simultaneously spontaneous and maximal flow of blood out of the slaughtered animal. This can only happen when only the veins and arteries connecting the head with the body are severed, causing the tissues in the body to become oxygen-starved. As the nerves and spinal column remain unbroken, the brain begins to send signals to the body for more blood, which carries this oxygen, but the blood cannot reach the brain because the veins and arteries have been severed and this is what becomes the dynamic pump and energetic neural exchange that causes the maximal amount of blood to leave the tissues and organs, thereby rendering the meat *halāl*. In other words, the meat is drained of its blood in a nonsynthetic and integrated way. The

rationale here, like in the kosher process, is to deplete the meat of as much blood as possible.

Once again, to underscore the subtext, all of this applies to natural and organic meat — meat that is not contaminated and toxified with antibiotics, hormones, pesticides, chemicals, and foul feed. Most people innocuously picture farms as being the simple and natural grazing grounds for domestic animals. They think farm animals there are comfortably wandering about or in their pens eating leisurely. Farms like that may be around, but they are quickly becoming the exception and not the rule. Most of the meat available for human consumption today does not come from such “innocent” settings. Chickens are raised in the hundreds of thousands in industrial buildings where most, if not all, of them do not see the light of day. They are confined to minimum mobility cages, with conveyor belts bringing them food and water and carrying away their waste. If they do move it is when they try to slide on their breasts, as some “developed” breeds of chicken grow too fast for their legs to support them! They are frequently sprayed and their food drenched with chemicals, hormones, and medicinal drugs. There is always that type of science that serves the financial empire, hence the genetic scientific engineering endeavors to spawn featherless poultry.

Many hogs are also raised in stalls, without ever being exposed to sunlight. Such cruel conditions are brutal to hogs (or any animal for that matter), which are known to be like dogs in many ways. Castrated bulls (steers or bullocks) may be out in the field grazing, but unfortunately on plants sprayed with pesticides, fields drenched with chemicals, vegetation pumped with hormones, and grain genetically modified to maximize profit.

In a typical case of “farmed animals,” a bull is castrated at birth (becomes a steer), taken from its mother and put on a diet of powdered milk, synthetic vitamins, minerals, and antibiotics. Drugs in its food induce lethargy to save on feed. Next, it is permitted to eat some pasture grass, but this is supplemented with processed feed premixed with antibiotics and growth-promoting drugs. At six months, it weighs around 250kg and is ready for the feed lot. Here

it is doused with pesticides and then placed in a pen that is lit around the clock to change natural sleep rhythms and encourage continuous feeding. Food consists of grains, urea, carbohydrates, ground-up newspaper, molasses, plastic pellets, and, most recently, reprocessed manure, a high-protein source. After four months in the feed lot, a steer weighs around 500kg. A few more doses of pesticides, antibiotics, and hormones are administered to pre-tenderize its flesh while it is still alive, and this is what makes it ready for the commercial or religious slaughter (kosher and *ḥalāl*).²⁷

Antibiotics are added to the feed of nearly all poultry, pigs, veal calves, and 60% of cattle; 75% of pigs eat feed laced with sulfa drugs (sulfonamides, the sulfa-related antibiotics that are used to treat bacterial and some fungal infections).²⁸ Cattle feeders use a variety of hormones and other additives to promote rapid weight gain in their animals.

While farmers rely more and more on chemicals to shore up animal health under factory conditions, dangerous residues are showing up in meat and poultry products at the supermarket: 14% of meat and poultry sampled by the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) in the mid- and late-1970s contained illegally (toxically) high levels of drugs and pesticides.²⁹ According to a relatively recent General Accounting Office (GAO) report, "...of the 143 drugs and pesticides GAO identified as likely to leave residues in raw meat and poultry, 42 are known to cause or are suspected of causing cancer, 20 of causing birth defects, and six of causing mutations."³⁰

The average meat, poultry, and dairy consumer in the US is ingesting higher amounts of toxic chemicals with his food than ever before. Meat production in the United States is big business, and the bottom line is more about maximizing profits than promoting consumer health. American cattle are fed a myriad of drugs, ranging from antibiotics to steroids, are given feed contaminated with feces and sprayed with pesticides, and are themselves sprayed with pesticides. All these chemicals remain as residues in the meat when it is consumed by people. As meat takes an especially long time to digest and is essentially fiberless, these chemicals are not

easily eliminated and can accumulate to cause all sorts of toxic reactions within the human body.

A world that has been poisoned by commercial priorities and financial urgencies has resulted in unprecedented amounts of pollution in all facets of human life. Environmental pollution poses a particular problem. Over the past two centuries, when Muslims have been, for all practical purposes, on the periphery of world affairs and decisions, the barrage of chemicals introduced into the environment has disrupted the balance of the ecosystem. Residues of many toxic chemicals such as pesticides, herbicides, and insecticides are ingested into our bodies along with food additives and preservatives that are added during commercial food processing.

In many cases, the contamination of food is an irreversible result. Foods such as organ meats, sweet potatoes, and butter can be dyed. Other processed and packaged goods like Jell-O, ice cream, sherbet, cookies, candy, and soda can contain large amounts of food additives. Most commercially raised meats and poultry are riddled with residues of antibiotics, tranquilizers, and hormones. It is even common practice to dip certain fish in an antibiotic solution to retard its spoilage. A person allergic to these antibiotics and drugs may be unknowingly ingesting them continuously, provoking either long-term or short-term reactions or illnesses, the source of which might remain unidentified. It is estimated that more than 10% of all Americans are sensitive to food additives. And even when a person eats only organically grown foods, the problems do not automatically go away.

Although meat is meant to rescue humans from starvation and malnutrition, man has perverted his dietary habits to accept the food of the carnivore, and thus has increased the risks of developing a number of disorders and diseases. For instance, saturated fat and cholesterol, which are found in high amounts in meats and other animal fats, increase the risk of hardening of the arteries and heart disease. The leading cause of death in America, heart disease, is three times more likely to occur in meat eaters than vegetarians. The consumption of meat by portions of society who are furthest from "survival levels" doubles their chances for colon and rectal

cancer, while tripling them for breast cancer. The high-protein intake of beef eaters places undue stress on the liver and kidneys, two important organs of detoxification; may deplete the body's calcium supply, leading to osteoporosis; and precipitates the uric acid it contains to settle in the joints, inducing painful gouty arthritis.

In addition, there are hidden poisons in meat and poultry, that, when eaten, place undue stress on the digestive systems of the "comfortable class." These include hormones, antibiotics, tranquilizers, additives, preservatives, and pesticides that are added to the meat in breeding and processing the animals. Such long-term bodily pollution creates a vast overall negative effect on public health, making almost all people susceptible to a host of pathological abnormalities. Health benefits commonly noticed by those who consume a very little amount of meat or no meat at all include improved digestion and decreased gastrointestinal disturbances, including less gas and constipation.

Why is meat the staple of "higher class modernities?" One answer was given at a US Senate Subcommittee on Health and Scientific Research,

The answer goes to the very heart of what's wrong with the decision-making machinery of the federal government, where issues are decided less on the basis of their scientific merit than of their economic and political consequences. Few politicians are willing to face up to the \$35 billion meat industry and to the several million farmers who make their living from raising animals for food.³¹

In the labyrinth of this issue lies the still un-investigated issue of just how far the *shar'ī dhabḥ* actually goes in draining the meat of its impurities, pathogens, and residuals? Can meat, dare it be said, even be defined as *meat* when the "genetics" of the animals it comes from have been tampered with? Or is the meat so contaminated, so toxic, so synthetically spoiled, and so modified that it cannot be rendered *ḥalāl*? This question begs the attention and vision of Muslim scientists and those in the pertinent professional

fields (agriculturalists, biologists, chemists, doctors, and nutritionists among others). But it is also an issue that will not be researched and investigated by governments who are driven less by health-based imperatives than by financial objectives. Only an Islamic government will be able to conduct an inquiry into this matter and carry out an investigation that will combine scriptural information with the scientific data so far produced to give an enlightened judgement.

The other pertinent issue here is that people, especially Muslims who claim to be closer to these *āyāt*, should begin to observe how far off course they are capable of going once they part company with their Creator. Here, the issue relates to meat, and as simple as it could be, it is man's greed for money and his acquiescence to the wealth and power structure that has rendered him today into a consumer of toxic meat and unhealthy food. If he would have straightforwardly honored the authority of Allah (ﷻ), the animals would be flourishing in their natural habitat, there would be a minimum amount of hunger and starvation, and we would most probably be eating less meat.

A summary of this masterful lesson may be cast in the following points:

1. Dead flesh (carrion) and what is considered dead (an animal choked, beaten, fallen, or gored to death) are all foul and toxic meats, and hence are inedible; so, too, are animals that have been scavenged by beasts and animals that have been slaughtered in the name of or on the altar of idols; and finally, animals that are corralled in a slaughtering process — for example, slaughtering animals for commercial profits and purposes — are not sanctioned by Allah (ﷻ).³²
2. Blood and pig meat are not edible.
3. It is permissible to eat the meat of an animal that was in the process of dying, but before its death was ritually slaughtered. Salvaging the animal's meat (slaughtering it before it dies) in the case that it is either in the throes of a natural death or in the case that it is dying due to one of the reasons above is called *tadhkiyah*.

4. All the above meats that are prohibited become permissible when a person is on the verge of death and out of necessity has to have something to eat to survive; if he eats these prohibited types of meat for survival reasons he bears no sin. In this regard, necessity has two conditions,
 - a. in eating the inedible meat, the amount eaten has to only be a portion that dispels the danger of death; and
 - b. if by eating this meat a person indulges or seeks to satisfy the taste buds, he bears sinful consequences.

The cutting instrument used for the *dhabh* should be sharp enough to cut through flesh and bone without difficulty, in order to speed up the animal's death. In other words it should cause the blood from the slaughtered animal to gush forth as quickly and as painlessly as possible.³³ As far as the butcher, it is preferable to have someone with experience, who is "cut for the job" and is psychologically able to perform this edgy task. The slaughtering itself should be perfected and done with care. This is in compliance with the hadith,

*Verily, Allah has prescribed perfection in doing everything, so if you have to terminate a life, do so with proficiency [that is, do it with the least amount of pain and suffering]; and if you sacrifice [an animal], do so with proficiency [with the least amount of pain and suffering], and anyone doing the task should sharpen his blade and comfort the animal [to be sacrificed]."*³⁴

This would mean in one sense that people should be caring for the animals in this process, that is, the animals should not be violently wrestled to the ground or dragged screaming to their slaughter. The butcher has to internalize Allah's (ﷻ) permission to take an animal's life and to do it as an act of endearment to Allah (ﷻ); hence, the animal should be facing the *qiblah*. The animal in its parting moments should be left to itself to move its limbs as it expires. There should be a personal and social atmosphere of appreciation for Allah's (ﷻ) license to have food from the "animal kingdom."

Important Life Decisions Are Not Made by Drawing Straws

“...And [you are forbidden] to seek to learn through divination what the future may hold in store for you: this amounts to scandalous behavior” (5:3). *Al-istiḡsām bi-al-azlām* is a form of foretelling. People in Arabia would go to the Ka‘bah and draw one of three bladeless arrows (pointers) when they were on the verge of making an important decision. One arrow would have written on it, “do not”; the second, “do”; and the third would have nothing written on it. If the person drew one of the arrows with the writing, then he would follow its instruction to do or not to do, but if he drew the blank one, he would repeat the drawing until he drew one of the arrows with the definitive direction.³⁵ Many of these “bingo” decisions had to do with a planned trip, a preparation for war, an intended marriage, a commercial venture, or some other consequential matter.

This “game of chance” was also applied to apportion certain amounts of meat to whomever would draw a “pointer/arrow” from a lot, each arrow of which designated a different quota of meat — regardless of whether the one drawing the lots was in need of the meat or not. People in this God-forsaken society would divide a sacrificial animal into 28 or 10 parts and then distribute it according to the “arrows they drew.” This is the type of “game” that is prohibited by the *āyah*.

With further implications, it should be understood that this *āyah* bans what is called today the *lottery* — the word itself coming from the Old English word *hlot*, which often referred to a chip of wood with a name inscribed on it. Any activity that apportions “value” in this random type of way is unsanctioned. *Al-istiḡsām bi-al-azlām* is tantamount to a game where winning tickets are picked from a revolving container of sorts. In the Arabian days of a scriptureless society there was something called *maysir*, a game of roulette involving ten pointers/indicators, seven of which were “live” (meaning that each would indicate a “win” or a “loss”), while the remaining three were neutral (indicating nothing). Corroborating *āyāt* would be expected to treat this and analogous behaviors no differently,

They will ask you about intoxicants and games of chance. Say, “In both there is great evil as well as some benefit for man; but the evil they cause is greater than the benefit they bring” (2:219).

O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Intoxicants, and games of chance, and idolatrous practices, and the divining of the future are but a loathsome evil of Satan’s doing: shun them, then, so that you might attain to a happy state! By means of intoxicants and games of chance, Satan seeks only to sow enmity and hatred among you, and to turn you away from conscientizing Allah and from the *ṣalāh*. Will you not, then, desist? (5:90–91).

Such conduct is indicative of a deficit in the ability to think through important decisions, of the power of institutionalized traditionalism, and of the greed to own something without due consideration to those who are in need. Despite these *āyāt*, Muslims have not demonstrated that they are immune from prosecuting their affairs in this manner. Some Qur’anicallly-illiterate Muslims use the “praiseful beads” (*masbaḥah*) or even by randomly opening the *muṣḥaf* and blindly putting a finger on an *āyah* of the open page to try to determine how to proceed on a certain issue. This vacuity extends to trying to foresee the future by looking into an empty cup of coffee. Besides it being meaningless, this is an indication of how much people can become disjointed from reality.

This whole attitude and its attendant customary practices were replaced by *Ṣalāh al-Istikhārah* (a communion for a persuasion). This is a two-unit *ṣalāh* (*rak‘atān*), followed by the well-known *du‘ā’*. Whenever a Muslim encounters uncertainty about something he wants to or needs to do, he mentions that particular “uncertain” affair in *Ṣalāh al-Istikhārah*. After the *ṣalāh* he reflects and tries to come to grips with his internal self on how he feels about the various options (choices) related to his potential course of action; and if the first time around does not give him a decisive feeling and

result in an air of confidence, then he may repeat the *ṣalāh* until such occurs. The books of hadith record that the people around Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) related he would teach them *Ṣalāh al-Istikhārah* as he would teach them a *sūrah* from the Qur'an; the Prophet (ﷺ) would say,

*If one of you is on the verge of engaging some situation or event, then go into two rak'aḥs [which are non-obligatory] and say, "O Allah! I ask You a choice through Your knowledge, and I ask You Your adeptness through Your power, and I ask You out of Your splendiferous grace; for it is You who is competent and I am not, it is You who knows and I do not, and Yours is the knowledge of the unknown. O Allah! If You know that this matter [and the supplicator states the intended action or effort] is good for me as pertains to my dīn, my livelihood, my immediate and far and distant affairs, then make it possible for me and facilitate it and then bless me for doing it; and if You know that this matter [and the supplicator states the intended action or effort] is unfavorable for me as pertains to my dīn, my livelihood, my immediate and far and distant affairs, then divert it from me and divert me from it. Assess and enable me to do what is right and prosperous wherever that may be and then make me satisfied with it." And then [once again] pronounce the intended action and effort.*³⁶

The immediate and direct meaning of “...and [you are forbidden] to seek to learn through divination what the future may hold in store for you: this is deviant conduct” applies to disallowing fortune-telling by means of casting or drawing lots (*sortilege*). However, other methods of doing the same thing fall under the inclusive meaning of the *āyah*; some of the major ones are:

1. *sciomanacy* – fortune-telling by means of consulting ghosts;
2. *cartomancy* – fortune-telling by means of examining a pack of tarot³⁷ or playing cards;
3. *haruspication* – fortune-telling by means of inspecting the entrails of animals, as practiced by priests in ancient Rome;

4. *geomancy* – fortune-telling by means of interpreting lines or figures drawn randomly, or patterns in the dust;
5. *pyromancy* – fortune-telling by means of observing and interpreting fire or flames;
6. *scrying* – fortune-telling or revealing hidden information by gazing into a crystal ball;
7. *ching* – fortune-telling based on an ancient Chinese book containing 64 symbolic diagrams;
8. *chiromancy*, *palmistry* – fortune-telling based on the pattern of lines in the palm of the hand; and
9. *astrology*, *horoscope* – one of the most popular, fortune-telling based on the relative positions of planets and signs of the zodiac³⁸ at a given time. In Western astrology, it is a chart of the position of the Sun, the Moon, and planets relative to the zodiac at the moment of birth, which is used to assess a person's character and forecast future influences. In casting a horoscope, the astrologer draws a circular diagram divided into twelve sections, or houses, showing the twelve signs of the zodiac around the perimeter and the Sun, the Moon, and planets as they were at the subject's time and place of birth. These heavenly bodies are supposed to represent different character traits and influences, and by observing their positions and interrelations the astrologer may gain "insight" into the subject's personality and foretell the main outlines of his or her life.

Al-istiḡsām bi-al-azlām is parallel to several traditional methods of attempting to acquire information by alleged paranormal means. The information to be interpreted is conveyed by some physical sources, such as dowsing or palm reading. Divinatory practices are found in many cultures, both past and present. All of this package of fortune-telling is perverse when placed in the overall serious work ethic of *al-ladhīna āmanū wa-‘amilū al-ṣāliḡāt*.

Nothing Is Missing from this *Dīn*

Today, those who are in denial of Allah [and His power] have lost all hope of [your ever forsaking] your *dīn*: do not, then, hold them in awe, but stand in awe of Me! Today have I perfected your *dīn* for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your *dīn* (5:3).

This appears to be the last or one of the last *āyāt* that were revealed to Muhammad (ﷺ) toward the end of his inspirational mission, punctuated as it was by the vicissitudes of human nature. On the auspicious occasion of its revelation, Allah (ﷻ) emphasized that the *kāfirs* had given up on trying to dilute or diminish this *dīn*. On that day, these *kāfirs* were in despair as they had finally lost all hope in their incessant policies and strategic thinking of compelling the Muslims to negotiate away this *dīn* or at least give up the foundations and the inspiration that come from it. The Muslims now, after over two decades of sacrifices and suffering, had their own *dīn*. They had their own leadership, independent of the power blocs in Arabia and the rest of the world. They had their autonomous state, free from the interference of other dynasties and regimes from the Orient to the Occident. They had their self-governing authority that was firmly implanted in the Qur'an and tightly knit around Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ).

Heretofore, there would be no buffers between them and Allah (ﷻ) — no man-made authorities, no worldly-centered elites, no vested-interests priorities, and no psychological inferiority. They were now free because they would answer only to Allah (ﷻ). This 23-year-old fact in the making had now mushroomed into their full-fledged Islamic self-determination; this is what became their *dīn*. And now that they had their *dīn*, their opponents had given up on ever being able to undo this *dīn*. They were the ones who were now precarious and feeling hopeless, and they knew that in light of the committed Muslims' achievements, they had no chance of reinstating the status quo.

“Do not, then, favor and fear them, but favor and fear Me!”

When the Muslims are with Allah (ﷻ), and He is the Almighty and the Omnipotent, these enemies of theirs will be the ones in social desperation and elitist depression, as was the case when Muhammad (ﷺ) and the faithful Muslims around him succeeded in replacing the oppressive order of the day with this *dīn*. These *kāfirs* and their enablers finally realized, after this marathon struggle and confrontation, that they would be unable to void this *dīn*. They may have, at one time, been content with seeing part of the Muslims’ *dīn* out of circulation, but that, too, they knew they could no longer achieve. They had learned a long and extended lesson through the disciplined struggle and principled jihad of the Prophet (ﷺ) and those who remained steadfast with him that they would never be able to corrupt this *dīn*. Though they may have been able to score a tactical victory from time to time, in the overall strategy and pattern of developments they were losing step by step and encounter after encounter.

This *dīn* was growing through their opposition; it was being strengthened by their wars, and it was gaining quality adherents through their intrigue. This *dīn* is not for sale. This *dīn* has its own recruits. And this *dīn* has survived all the tricks and subterfuge from that custodial first generation all the way down to our time and location. This *dīn* survived the hostile knowledge of its enemies and the sincere ignorance of its adherents throughout the ages. Never will human society be without at least a core of committed Muslims who will honor their word and fulfill their pledge with Allah (ﷻ).

Committed Muslims know what this *dīn* means and will exert themselves to engage in a struggle if that is what is required. This critical mass of committed and combat-ready Muslims will continue to uphold this *dīn* in ink and in blood. When there are sweating, bleeding, and tearful Muslims upholding their honorary relationship with Allah (ﷻ), there will be — in fulfillment of Allah’s (ﷻ) words — those who will dread them,

Today, those who are in denial of Allah [and His power] have lost all hope of [your ever forsaking] your

***dīn*: [therefore, you Muslims!] do not fear and favor them [the God-deniers], fear and favor Me! (5:3).**

This *āyah* is tantamount to an adjustment of the Muslims' psychology. The committed Muslims should not be afraid of or frightened by the structures of *kufri*, the strategies of God-deniers, and the schemes of authority usurpers. However, if and when the Muslims dislocate and misplace their fear, when they no longer fear Allah (ﷻ) and His power, and begin to fear the *kāfirs* and their "powers," then at that time this whole equation changes. Even so, as much as it may change the balance of power, this *dīn* will remain unblemished and unalterable in theory. The practice of Muslims may fall short, as is the case in today's world, but the concept, the principle, and the ideology of Islam, the *dīn*, will remain forever and ever more,

Today have I perfected your *dīn* for you, and have bestowed upon you the full measure of My blessings, and willed that self-surrender unto Me shall be your *dīn* (5:3).

The *āyah* places the Muslims in the scope of time. They come to feel that the long struggle of all the Prophets (ﷺ) has come to a climax; the *dīn* they all were tasked to bring about has now been consolidated. Whatever "transitional" features may have accompanied previous human experiences, whatever incurred penalties that may have been part of previous scriptural history, and whatever socio-cultural peculiarities that were meant for a peculiar people at a particular time — all of that is abrogated with the Muhammadi climax of Islam. Mankind has now the final and the everlasting Scripture that is inclusive of human cultures, all-embracing of human races, accommodating of human nature. Mankind has now this consummate *dīn* and perfected godly accommodation. The morals and the laws that have been outlined throughout the real life of real human beings during this practical period of 23 years are final and irrevocable. The world now has the perfect set of morals and values and the model code of laws and their implementations.

With the Qur'an and the prophetic model of Muhammad (ﷺ), humanity can spare itself the tortured trial and error phases it goes through when it abandons God the authority and God the divinity. Muslims today should know there is a humanity that is subconsciously crying out for an unblemished faith-system. And non-Muslims should know there are "Muslims" today who deflect and detract from this *dīn* through governments and power structures that do nothing but make Islam and the covenant with Allah (ﷻ) an anachronistic phenomenon. The misunderstanding of non-Muslims and the misrepresentation of Muslims have been synergistically at work to make the task of reinvigorating these Qur'anic meanings ever more challenging.

The revelation of this *āyah* is not simply coincidental to the final liberation of the Ka'bah and Makkah from the *mushriks* and the *kāfirs*. The daylong and agelong struggle of the Prophet (ﷺ) was to liberate, emancipate, and set Makkah free. And when he finally achieved that, the *āyāt* above were revealed to him. A valid understanding of this *āyah*, which has to be revisited in our time and circumstances, is that "perfecting the *dīn*" means vacating al-Bayt al-Ḥarām (the Sanctified Masjid in Makkah) from the *mushriks* and deporting them from this Holy Precinct.³⁹ This is what made it possible, for the first time since the word *iqra'* was revealed, for the committed Muslims to demonstrate their Hajj in the total absence of these *mushriks*.

What happens, though, when the *mushriks* return and occupy al-Masjid al-Ḥarām and Makkah itself, as has happened and as we visualize today? The Saudi regime is a 20th- and 21st-century reincarnation of the ruling elite that opposed, defied, and sought to kill Muhammad (ﷺ) when he presented them with Allah's (ﷻ) word of freedom and the *dīn* of justice. It is baffling why today's Muslims throughout the world cannot see through the camera religiosity of kings and princes who feel more comfortable in the company of Zionists and imperialists than in the company of committed Muslims belonging to the Islamic movement of our time. In the time of Muhammad (ﷺ) the Abrahamic rituals of the Arabians were not a major obstacle to dismantling the system (*dīn*) of *shirk* in Makkah

and Arabia; why then should Muhammadi rituals be an obstacle to dismantling the system (*dīn*) of *shirk* in Makkah today?

This *āyah* is not meant for reductionist Muslims, apologetic Muslims, or inferior Muslims. It needs the confident psychology, the refined mind, and the firm willpower of unwavering, committed Muslims to understand that this *dīn* is perfect. No other *dīn* (ideology, belief system, and legislature) comes close to it. In the course of human experience all other human laws and governments have been a miserable failure. In this Qur'an is the fact that this *dīn* has been completed, accomplished, and finalized,

No single thing have We neglected in Our Book [Assignment]... (6:38);

We have bestowed from on high upon you [O Muhammad], step by step, this divine Writ, to make everything clear... (16:89);

For sure, this Qur'an guides to what is without evasion or compromise... (17:9).

If this *dīn* were to be restricted to morality then these *āyāt* would not be reinforcing the notion that no significant affair in life has been overlooked by the information and wisdom found in this illuminating Qur'an. Yes, there are laws in this Qur'an. No one should be so naive as to think that the world needs no social laws and that the "refined" human morality is sufficient to determine what is suitable for man's social relations and his economic entanglements. Several hadiths bolster this meaning, among them one narrated by 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib,

"There will be a sedition of high treason." He was asked, "So what is the way out?" He replied, "[It is] the Book of Allah; in it there is news of those who preceded you, and information concerning those who will postdate [follow] you and rules that apply to you. It [the Book of Allah] is the final

*word, tolerating no jest. Any autocrat who parts from it will be crushed by Allah; and whoever seeks guidance from [a source] besides it will be misguided by Allah. It is Allah's truehearted and fixed strand.*⁴⁰

Another hadith clarifies the matter further,

*In truth, this Qur'an is the means to connect with Allah; it shines intensely. It is the efficacious balsam. It safeguards whomever holds on to it; it rescues whomever follows it; it [the Qur'an] never bends and twists [so that it needs] to be straightened, it never deviates so as to be blameworthy. Its miracles keep on coming. It does not fade into disuse even though it is continuously referred to.*⁴¹

This Qur'an and this *dīn*, contrary to the traditional and cultural overtones today, are meant to primarily deal with issues of power (only one person in ten thinks that his government responds to the people's will). This completed and polished *dīn* means to develop a sound political understanding of the world in which there are political participatory processes where all people are involved in making the important decisions in their societies — the more a state government institutionalizes *shūrā*, the more it grants political participation to its people. The Qur'an and this *dīn*, if the Muslims were thinking out the meanings therein, would have them think through, for instance, the planet's seas, marine life, and maritime economic activity — including fishing, offshore oil and gas, transport, tourism, and waste disposal — in a comprehensive, interconnected, and holistic manner. Regrettably, all such activities now, to the tune of 14.5 trillion US dollars (US gross domestic product in 2008), are subject to man-made laws, the priorities of transnational corporations, the national interest, and securities of empires and military powers. Governments with military aspirations to rule the world today have control of space; modern communications depend on satellites in outer space. What laws are they going by to make this scientific and human achievement fair to the rest of mankind?

This *dīn* has something to say in this regard and in regard to other significant matters once the Muslims elevate their thoughts onto the level and standard of the Qur'an. The world today is witness to international organizations that are formed around economic priorities, financial empires, and military "necessities." Many nation-states belong to regional organizations through which, with varying degrees of success or failure, they attempt to pursue their economic, political, and strategic interests. In the absence of thinking and moving Muslims being the epicenter of the exchange of ideas and the way decisions are made, the "modern" world behaves and is governed by mannerisms and laws that omit the universal standard of justice found in the Scripture (Qur'an). It is no surprise, then, to have in place of our functional and power-based *dīn* an African Union, Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS), European Union (EU), League of Arab States, Free Trade Area of the Americas (FTAA), etc.

As our implemented *dīn* has been sequestered far away from circumscribing and shaping the activities of chief executives, corporate CEOs, their pundits, think tanks, and academic researchers, they have developed a market-based globalization of the world economy, which is further advanced now than ever before. The interests and loyalties of transnational corporations reach beyond national interests and loyalties. Transnational corporations have bases in many countries and an unusually broad portfolio of activities. Seeking markets and strategic partnerships, they reach out beyond their original national borders and find shareholders and managers from other countries, as well as consumers. Transnational corporations seek to minimize controls on trade, and their interests therefore often collide with those of governments, both in their home country (where their head office is located) and in their many field countries (where they trade). When we Muslims are no longer setting the standards of justice in the world, this is what happens. In the year 2000, General Motors was worth more than the national economy of New Zealand.⁴² This is just a passing example of how a complete *dīn* coupled with

its incomplete enlistees leads to a polarization of power and, thereby, wealth in the world at large.

The *dīn* could never be perfected and completed were it not for Allah's (ﷻ) mercy as the underlying architecture of the entire systemic divine power culture. None of His social laws are meant to constrain or impinge upon man and his important responsibilities on earth; rather they are all designed to make it easier for him to discharge the weighty task he has been commissioned for by his Creator. Allah (ﷻ) inaugurates the divine Writ with His mercy, and makes it a theme and constant reminder throughout the words of the *āyāt* and the deeds of the Messenger (ﷺ). Few moved dynamically with the divine, so as to have the awareness to translate realities on the ground into a responsive set of policies, better than the successors (*khalīfahs*) to Allah's Prophet (ﷺ); cognizant that reality unfolds within the domain of Allah's (ﷻ) mercy, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb made an *ijtihād* to temporarily rescind the *ḥudūd* during the Year of Famine (*ʿĀm al-Ramādah*).⁴³

Hence, “...as for him, however, who is forced by dire necessity and not by a disposition to sinning, behold, Allah is much-forgiving, merciful.” As is the case with all practical directives there are some exceptions. Obviously, the banned products and conducts above are general, universal, and eternal. All Muslims must abstain and withhold from any of the above outlined items. The exception concerns the one who finds himself, out of necessity, being pressured and existentially coerced into what he would otherwise not do. There may be times in life when a person, contrary to the principles he has committed to, would have to eat something that is *ḥarām* and harmful. If a person is dying of hunger he is permitted to eat any of the above banned meat provided he does so reluctantly and does not indulge; by doing that he avoids death and survives. In this case he will find Allah (ﷻ) to be alleviating and facilitating of his survival, health, and deliverance from a possible death.

Proper Nutrition and Intermarriage Are Health Inducing

They will ask you [O Muhammad] as to what is [healthy] and lawful for them. Say, “[Healthy and] Lawful to you are all the good things of life.”

And as for those hunting animals that you discipline by imparting to them something of the knowledge Allah has imparted to yourselves, eat of what they seize for you, but mention Allah’s name over it, and remain on guard concerning Allah [and His corrective power]: indeed, Allah is swift in reckoning.

Today, all the wholesome things of life have been made lawful to you. And the food of those who have been vouchsafed revelation aforetime is lawful to you, and your food is lawful to them. And [lawful to you are], in wedlock, morally fortified women from among those who are committed [to this divine Writ], and in wedlock, morally fortified women from among those who have been vouchsafed revelation before your time — provided that you give them their dowers, taking them in honest wedlock, not in fornication, nor as secret love-companions.

But as for him who rejects commitment [to Allah], in vain will be all his works: for in the life to come he shall be among the unregenerate (5:4-5).

The expression, “They will ask you,” indicates the people around Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) were inquisitive and curious about aspects of the Islamic big picture that was being painted in front of their very eyes. These privileged pioneers were sensitive enough to approach Muhammad (ﷺ) with queries about what is and is not allowable, wholesome, and legal.

There can be no doubt that at this opportune moment in their lives, feeling a sense of freedom from the pressure to have to conform to a set of man-made conventions about how they should act or think, the disciples of Muhammad (ﷺ) were reborn. Their new

life, their new identity, and their new attitude had to live by the guidelines that come from Allah (ﷻ). All pre-Qur'anic and anti-Islamic customs, habits, and traditions that were inconsistent with the new directional course had to go. Now they were anxious to live this new life of honoring Allah (ﷻ). These reborn and reformed Arabians knew what it was like in the *jāhiliyah* and they now knew what it is like to be in Islam. They knew they had gone through a thorough transformation from “low-lives” to the compliment of being with Allah (ﷻ). They appreciated this new life of Islam as much as they disparaged their previous life of infidelity. They were now commanded and controlled by their desire to serve and satisfy Allah (ﷻ). After this changeover from denying Allah (ﷻ) to affirming Him these Arabian forerunners were cautious not to offend Allah (ﷻ) in any way. Their core thoughts were centered on gratifying and catering to Allah (ﷻ).

Upon learning there are unlawful and illegal things, they naturally went and asked Muhammad (ﷺ) what is lawful for them. These were not the thick-skinned and stone-hearted nomads so often depicted in Judeo-Christian literature. They were the ones who resuscitated the noble part of human nature that sought a comfortable relationship with Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). And they received their answer, **“Lawful to you are all the wholesome and good things [of life].”**

This is the general rule: everything in life that is conducive to or characteristic of physical and moral well-being is allowable, sanctioned, and authorized. No human being has been denied or refused any healthy and salutary thing in life. The only things that are unlawful and unhealthy are the noxious ones. If human beings were in their right senses, they by their very nature would be averse and indisposed toward all these *muḥarramāt* (unlawful items). Who in his good sense would want to eat disgusting dead meat? Or morbid blood? Or pathogenic pig meat? A salubrious human psychology cannot bear eating meat that has been offered through idols or any other ungodly process that sheds blood for profit and slaughters animals for money. A sound and stable human being is also opposed to gambling and fortune-telling in all its nonsensical forms.

In addition to the types of ritually fit, legally sanctioned, and physically healthy meat mentioned above, there is another category of permissible meat: the meat that is fetched by conditioned and trained animals, such as falcons and hawks, as well as dogs and *Panthera leo* (African lion), or any trained animals that can be taught how to go forth and retrieve game or other animals hunted for food,

And as for those fetching animals you train by imparting to them something of the knowledge Allah has imparted to yourselves, eat of what they seize for you, but mention Allah's name over it, and remain on guard concerning Allah's [power]: certainly, Allah is swift in reckoning (5:4).

The condition for the lawfulness of the meat fetched by trained hounds is that they be dependable and time-tested to obey the instructions of their managers/hunters. This means that these hunting animals will not eat any of the meat they fetch; and the only time they may eat from the meat they were assigned to fetch is when they are hungry and/or their managers/hunters are not around. If this type of game-hound partakes of the game animal it has caught, doing so for itself and not the hunter, then it is not regarded to be disciplined and trained and, therefore, the definition of permissibility renders the catch unlawful.

According to one definition, a hound is considered to be successfully trained and disciplined if it withholds eating any meat from the game it has caught, instead handing the game over to its trainer, during three consecutive trials. The litmus test for disciplining a hawk is for it to come back to its trainer in an unbroken manner when he calls it. In this regard, the following hadiths shed some light on the subject,

If you send out your trained hounds and invoke Allah's name, then eat of that which has been fetched for you; but if a hound eats any of it, do not eat [from that animal]; the fear is that the hound fetched it for itself.⁴⁴

The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) forbade eating any beast that has a canine tooth [nāb], and every bird that has a claw [mikhlab].⁴⁵

All of these matters should dwell in the active consciousness of man and in the behavior of society. Animals are given life by Allah (ﷻ); no human being has the right to deny them their life without a permit from Allah (ﷻ). And no conglomerate has the right to view the animal kingdom as a “killing” for profit in utter disregard for the mercy that should be extended to the others of God’s creatures and creation. Therefore, **“...remain on guard concerning Allah’s [interposing power]: verily, Allah is swift in reckoning.”**

Moving seamlessly from one type of nourishment to its emotional, psychological, and socio-political analog, the *āyāt* proceed to list not only who is appropriate and wholesome in marriage, but also extend Islamic inclusivity into the domain of people of previous scripture, making them feel at home in an Islamic society,

Today, all the [alimentary and] good things of life have been made lawful to you. And the food of those who have been vouchsafed revelation aforetime is lawful to you, and your food is lawful to them. And [lawful to you are], in wedlock, morally fortified women from among those who are committed [to this divine Writ], and, in wedlock, morally fortified women from among those who have been vouchsafed revelation before your time — provided that you give them their dowers, taking them in honest wedlock, not in fornication, nor as secret love-companions (5:5).

Here, the fine words of Allah (ﷻ) suggest that lawful acts in life are health inducing, not only for the individual but also for society at large. Hence, it should come as no surprise that Islamic legality is characterized by the type of inclusiveness, coexistence, and understanding that fosters building supportive relationships with those who do not fully acknowledge the final dispensation given to man by Allah (ﷻ). Non-Muslims, who belong to scripture

(the Old and New Testaments) and live in Islamic societies or are citizens of an Islamic state, fall within the scope of Islamic social interaction. It is not consistent with the nature of civic Islamic behavior or the laws of Allah (ﷻ) to give scriptural Christians and scriptural Jews their religious freedom only to leave them within a “religious enclave” isolated and cut-off from the pulse of Islamic society. The society being called “Islamic” here is an inclusive society, and insofar as scriptural Jews and Christians are concerned, it is contingent on their goodwill and willingness to partake in the daily interactions and the public discourse within the larger Islamic social order. An Islamic society opens its doors for participating Christians and Jews to feel the warmth of Islam, the affection of Muslims, and the latitude of an Islamic legal system.

The Qur’an designates that the closeness and familiarity between Muslims and previously scripted peoples (Christians and Jews) should be such that all can, without reservation, partake of each other’s food, voluntarily of course. In this family atmosphere the food of Jews and Christians is lawful to Muslims and the food of Muslims is lawful to them. This opens the door to visitations, hospitality, and breaking bread together. A society like this engenders fondness and mutual understanding.

The major step forward in minimizing the impact that group solidarity tendencies (*‘aṣabiyaḥ*) have on curtailing the human conscience with racism, nationalism, and denominationalism, is to render, by Allah’s (ﷻ) words, the honorable and chaste women belonging to scripture lawful in marriage to Muslim men. The term, *muḥṣanāt*, refers to women who are clean-living and God-fearing, women who are morally sheltered. In this context, Muslim women are defined as *muḥṣanāt*, and so are committed Christian and Jewish women. Muslim men, in their heightened Islamic consciousness, may marry Christian and Jewish *muḥṣanāt*, quite unlike the practices associated with the “Christian or Jewish” consciousness where it is not out of a “religious” impulse that they marry other scripturalists. Secular Christians and secular Jews can marry anyone because scripture to them is irrelevant. However, if they consider themselves to be practicing Christians or practicing Jews they do

not authorize, generally speaking, their members to marry “outside” the faith.

With regard to the myopic approach some major religions take to “inter-faith” marriages, here is a sampling, for example, from Catholic guidelines on marriage, especially as they pertain to marrying one “outside” of the faith:

1. marriage of all Catholics (both parties Catholic) before a (Protestant) minister or civil magistrate will be no marriage at all (the marriage must be performed by a bishop, priest, or other representative of the Church);
2. marriage of all fallen-away Catholics (those who have become Protestants or infidels) before a minister or a civil magistrate will be no marriage at all;
3. marriage of a Catholic to a non-baptized person is never a real marriage unless the Church grants a dispensation; such a marriage before a minister or a justice of the peace is no marriage at all;
4. marriage of a Catholic to a Protestant (one never baptized in the Catholic Church) before a minister or a civil magistrate will be no marriage at all, unless the Holy See grants a special dispensation (as it has done for the United States); and
5. marriage of a Protestant to a Protestant (provided they were never baptized in the Catholic Church) is valid.

Jewish guidelines express a similar attitude. Judaism makes obligatory the requirement to reproduce and continue the human race. The first commandment in the Bible is “And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply...” (Genesis, 1:22). Men are therefore obligated to marry in order to fulfill this commandment. There are, however, certain prohibited relationships. A cohen (a member of the priestly class, having certain rights and duties in the synagogue), for example, may not marry a divorcee. In certain cases, the marriage is not recognized *ab initio* (from the beginning), that is, like a marriage with a mother, sister, daughter, non-Jewess, or wife of another man. According to this, a Jew who marries a non-Jewess is somewhat like him marrying his mother or another man’s wife.

As regards the underlying historical experience of current biblical reading on the subject, intermarrying with persons who worshiped idols would pose a threat to the covenant relationship of God's faithful people. Abraham was very concerned to secure a wife for his son Isaac (☪) from among his faithful kinfolk (Genesis, 24:4,14–15). Similarly Isaac charged his son Jacob (☪) not to marry one of the Canaanite women but to go back to the same kinfolk to find a wife (Genesis, 28:1–2). Moses (☪) warned the people of Israel that when they entered the Promised Land they must not marry the people there who worshiped false gods (Exodus, 34:11–16). When Samson asked his parents to arrange a marriage for him with a Philistine woman, they urged him rather to marry an Israeli woman (Judges, 14:1–4).

It is part of biblical understanding among Jews and Christians that Solomon's wives included many foreign women: Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonians, and Hittites. The Lord had said to his people concerning these strange others, "Ye shall not go in to [marry] them, neither shall they come in unto you: for surely they will turn away your heart after their gods..." (1 Kings, 11:1–2). Later, when the people of Israel returned from captivity in Babylon, many men brought with them foreign wives and children. After much deliberation it was agreed that the men must separate themselves from these women and children (Ezra, 10:1–44).

In what passes for the New Testament, St. Paul speaks against marrying outside the faith,

Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness? And what concord hath Christ with Belial? or what part hath he that believeth with an infidel? And what agreement hath the temple of God with idols? for ye are the temple of the living God; as God hath said, I will dwell in them, and walk in them; and I will be their God, and they shall be my people (2 Corinthians, 6:14–16).

But some people come to faith after their marriages to “unbelievers.” In such an instance, St. Peter advises them, in this case women, to be patient, reverent, and chaste so that their husbands, seeing the work of the Lord in their lives, may also come to faith (1 Peter, 3:1–2).

These “Christian” and “Jewish” opinions about intermarrying ultimately end up pointing to Islam as the only human relationship with Allah (ﷻ) that is socially accommodative and cooperative. There is no “religious” segregation or faith-based isolation between Islam and followers of previous scriptures. To the most intimate feelings in human nature, Islam is multi-faith. Nutrition and procreation are perceived as common issues of love and sharing. But this does not mean that Muslims are required to submit to Christian and Jewish military powers or to be second-fiddle to Christian and Jewish alliances. This is an altogether different issue, which will come up on many occasions as this *sūrah* progresses.

Christian and Jewish women of high moral character are lawful to Muslim men on the same basis that Muslim women are lawful to Muslim men, “...provided that you [Muslim men] give them [your wives-to-be] their dowers, taking them in honest wedlock, not in fornication, nor as secret love-companions.”

Dowers or bride-wealth have to preface the marital relationship. Never is money meant to exchange hands for purposes of illicit love, adultery, or fornication, all of which diminish a woman’s status, rendering her the temporary possession of any man who can pay for sex. Similarly, attaching a woman to a man in order to satisfy his lustful appetite for sex, as opposed to both of them entering into a loving and responsible relationship, is abusive to women. These demeaning relationships have been a part of human society and human history before, during, and after this Qur’an was revealed. It is only within the spirit and society of Islam that men and women will have a loving mutual relationship through their common bond with Allah (ﷻ).

We understand from this discourse that the meat processed by a system of ideas and policies in a conflict position with Allah (ﷻ) is forbidden; this is another way of saying the food of the *mushriks*

is forbidden. Similarly, those who are socialized to a set of “principles” or founding documents that run contrary to Allah’s (ﷻ) guidance, such as disallowing scripted people (for instance, Jews, Christians, and Muslims) from comingling and cohabiting with each other in matrimony, are courting their own destruction, and as such, committed Muslims are not permitted to have any kind of meaningful relationship with these kinds of *mushriks*, **“But as for him who rejects commitment [to Allah in these matters], in vain will be all his works: for in the life to come he shall be among the unregenerate.”**

All these do’s and don’ts are contingent upon a commitment to Allah (ﷻ), a covenant with Allah (ﷻ), and an adherence to Allah (ﷻ). Honoring these values and legality exactly as they are outlined is *imān* itself. Anyone trying to find an excuse or to develop an argument that relieves him of this contractual responsibility with Allah (ﷻ) will have gained the distinction of *kufr*. And whenever a person is consumed with this *kufr* he loses all merits to whatever he does; eventually all the deeds and actions of a *kāfir* are dispirited and deflated,

...for his parable is that of a smooth rock with [a little] soil upon it — and then a rainstorm smites it and leaves it hard and exposed. Such as these shall have no gain whatsoever from all their [good] works, for Allah does not guide people who refuse to acknowledge [the truth about Allah] (2:264).

Engagement by Muslims Does Not Mean Passive Acceptance

Even with all of the above being so clear on how Muslims are all-inclusive and all-embracing in their lifestyle, leaving no pockets of segregation or enclaves of discrimination in the social ambiance of the Qur’an and the Prophet (ﷺ), they nonetheless have to be mindful of pathological social attitudes and behaviors alien to the domain of Islam that impinge upon this Islamic openmindedness and openheartedness with biblical Christians and Jews. We Mus-

lims should not be so simpleminded or inexperienced as to turn a blind eye to the endemic maladies that are threatening the human quality and social stability of both Jews and Christians. The license to eat their food and intermarry with them does not mean that accompanying Qur'anic principles are to be thrown to the wayside; hence committed Muslims are advised to do so with open eyes and with an awareness of the risks that the people of previous scripture have tainted their lives with.

On the issue of food, the Muslims cannot accept the type of food Christians and Jews are routinely consuming if that food is adulterated, if it contains extraneous material, if it is infused with dangerous amounts of poisons or filth, or if it has been processed or stored under unsanitary conditions. There may be lax areas and diminished hygienic awareness in certain "Christian" or "Jewish" peoples. Some of this may have more to do with the commercial religion of these people than with their claimed biblical origins. Their commercial interests eclipse their moral practices and they look the other way when there are environmental contaminants, toxins from microorganisms, bacterial pathogens, and other potentially harmful substances that have made it into the food chain. Since it is almost impossible for food to be 100% pure, tolerance thresholds have been determined for each type of contaminant. Very hazardous materials can be ruled so dangerous that no amount of them should be detected (a "zero tolerance" so to speak). Much of this may be attributed to the fact that there is no *ṭahārah* (extra-material cleanliness) concept in the Judeo-Christian culture.

With the Islamic consciousness of *ṭahārah* and the utility of modern scientific technology there should be a high level of unadulterated food available. The problem is that the secular religion of the official world has made it, so far, impossible for these two domains to intersect and positively interact for the benefit of public health. Technology has posed questions about the definition of a safe level of exposure to potentially harmful agents. Sensitive analytical techniques can now readily detect traces of contaminants in foods at levels unattainable in the 1970s. Contaminant levels at parts per billion and even parts per trillion can be detected

in air, water, foods, and even human milk. The long-term effects on health of chronic exposure to such low levels of multiple contaminants remain unknown though.

Under the US Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act, the EPA (Environmental Protection Agency) is required to consider the risks and benefits of agricultural chemicals.⁴⁶ The current policy of the EPA regarding risk of pesticide exposure, has defined negligible risk as acceptable; more precisely, the use of a chemical like a pesticide that would cause one death per million people due to cancer over a lifetime (70 years) is justifiable or passable. For the record, no known cancer-causing agents can be added to foods; but there is an additional problem inherent in assessing cancer risk: estimating the risk poses a problem because the delay between exposure to a carcinogen (cancer-causing agent) and development of cancer can be many years.

Far from using the increased capacity of technology to improve public health, pesticides like glyphosate and agricultural chemicals like Alar, food poisoning, artificial food colors, saccharin, and bovine growth hormone (a bioengineered hormone to stimulate milk production in cows) have become focuses of consumer concern in recent years regarding food risk fostered by technology.⁴⁷ Despite these fears, an estimated two-thirds of all deaths and one-third of all hospitalizations in the United States are linked to lifestyle choices and to factors for which individuals are at least partially responsible: smoking, alcohol consumption, traffic accidents, obesity, excess blood cholesterol in balanced diets, decreased physical activity, and high blood pressure (hypertension).⁴⁸ The risk of disease also depends upon an individual's health history and genetic predisposition in some cases. Deficiencies in primary healthcare cannot be ignored because they tend to affect pregnant women, the fetus, infants, low-income people, and the elderly in particular.

The Judeo-Christian sense of food consumption makes for a favorable dietary interaction with Qur'anic standards, generally speaking. The portion of food usually not considered consumable in such diets includes husks, hulls, rinds, peels, some seeds, bones, and some gristle and the like. There is also a common awareness

of product freshness, which refers to the degree of chemical change in a food due to breakdown by enzymes and chemical processes within the food itself. Oxidation, a change in color and texture or flavor of a food, and loss of nutrients like vitamin C are possible consequences.

There is also a common sense of food spoilage, the decay or decomposition of food due to microbial metabolism by molds, fungi, yeasts, and bacteria growing on the food. Bacteria and molds are always present on foods exposed to air. In an appropriate environment, with suitable temperature and moisture, they will begin to break down constituents in food. Refrigeration slows the process because microbial metabolism is based on chemical reactions that become slower at lower temperatures. However, several species of yeasts and molds that can spoil food grow slowly at refrigerator temperatures, and will eventually decompose even refrigerated foods. Unlike bacterial contamination in foods, moldy food (like moldy bread and cheese) is visible. Organisms that cause food poisoning generally cannot grow in the refrigerator; *campylobacter* (campylobacteriosis) is one important exception.⁴⁹

Spoiled or rotten food is usually obvious because it tastes and smells bad. On the other hand, organisms that cause food poisoning cannot be spotted so easily. Safety precautions in handling and in storing food are recommended. Besides microbial attack, food can also be destroyed by insects, endogenous enzymes, spontaneous chemical reactions (such as reaction with oxygen), burning during excessive cooking, and physical changes brought about by freezing, heating, and handling.

The “food culture” in the West, which is quickly spreading hither and yon, has a few problems at a lethal level. One of them is botulism, a rare though deadly form of food poisoning due to ingestion of a toxin produced by the anaerobic soil bacterium *Clostridium botulinum*. Several strains of *Clostridium botulinum* produce one of the most deadly natural toxins. It is estimated that a few micrograms of the toxin could kill an adult. Since *botulinum* toxins are neurotoxins (nerve poisons), this explains symptoms such as nausea, vomiting, sudden weakness, and difficulty in breathing. Paral-

ysis and death can occur in two to ten days. Early detection is a critical factor to assure timely treatment with *botulinum* antitoxin.

Infant botulism was first recognized in the United States in 1976, and it is now the most common form of botulism. In susceptible infants, the *botulinum* bacterium can propagate before the development of normal intestinal flora that would inhibit it. Botulism is becoming more common with the use of microwave cooking, which may not sterilize food completely. Botulism is usually associated with canned food, especially improperly home-canned, non-acidic vegetables, such as string beans, sweet corn, beets, asparagus, spinach, and chard. Toxin production is apt to occur when contaminated food is stored at neutral or slightly alkaline pH at room temperature for 12–24 hours away from air, and then not reheated before serving. Improperly stored restaurant foods (potato salad, pot pies, stews, turkey loaf, preserved meat, fish, and milk), have been reported as causes of outbreaks of botulism. Low-acid foods that are not canned, such as salami and other processed meats, depend upon a combination of treatments to inhibit germination of *Clostridium botulinum* spores and bacterial growth: mild heat treatment, the addition of sodium nitrite and other additives; and refrigeration.⁵⁰

Salmonella, a bacterium that frequently causes food poisoning, is another food problem.⁵¹ Over 1,300 strains of *Salmonella* have been identified. *Salmonella* does not form spores and is destroyed by heat (cooking and pasteurization). While it has routinely been found in animal feed, food processing plants, and food handling facilities, its most conducive habitat is the intestinal tract of an animal host, and hence the bacteria are easily spread by fecal contamination. Flies, rodents, and insects that come into contact with infected fecal material may also contaminate food. Sewage-contaminated water is also known to carry *Salmonella* and cause disease.

Livestock and poultry are major sources of human infection. *Salmonella* bacteria now contaminate an estimated 37% of chickens and turkeys, 12% of pork, and 5% of all beef.⁵² It grows readily in milk and milk-ingredient dishes like custard, egg dishes, and salad dressing. Meat and meat products like sausage, meat pies, sandwich-

es, and chili can become contaminated if infected by a food handler and then allowed to stand at room temperature for several hours.

Salmonellosis, a form of food poisoning caused by *Salmonella*, is one of the three most common food-borne diseases associated with bacteria, and it is one of the fastest growing food-borne illnesses. Salmonellosis affects four million Americans yearly. Some strains of *Salmonella* resist antibiotics, and dairy cattle fed antibiotics were the likely source of a drug-resistant *Salmonella* strain that caused a large US outbreak of food poisoning, involving six states, in 1985. This outbreak caused 1,000 deaths, 35,000 hospitalizations, and left an estimated 125,000 people with increased risk of chronic illnesses such as arthritis, osteomyelitis, ankylosing spondylitis, and colitis.⁵³

Salmonellosis often causes flu-like symptoms. Fever, abdominal cramping, headache, diarrhea, and vomiting generally appear 12–36 hours after eating tainted food. Symptoms may last from two days to a week. The illness is most severe in those with weakened immune systems, commonly found in very young children and in the elderly. Mal-digestion and mal-absorption can result from intestinal damage due to this disease.

Salmonellosis was almost unknown in the United States 50 years ago; however, the increased volume and speed of food production, increased drug resistance of bacteria, and relaxed enforcement by government agencies has contributed to widespread contamination of food, especially poultry. Raw milk, raw cheese, any raw or undercooked meat including salami and hamburger, and fresh eggs can be contaminated by feces and fecal bacteria and can thus be a potential source of contamination. Part of the reason for pasteurizing dairy is to combat the potential of *Salmonella* poisoning. Freshwater as well as marine fish caught from waters highly polluted by raw sewage may be contaminated by *Salmonella*. The bacteria is not likely to infect fruits or vegetables.

As a precautionary measure, all food handlers should carefully clean all equipment used in food preparations, including cutting boards, and furthermore, they should thoroughly wash their hands before handling food to eliminate fecal contamination. Raw vegeta-

bles should not come into contact with utensils used to prepare raw meat and poultry. Food for which the possibility of contamination is likely should be refrigerated. *Salmonella* is destroyed by heat at 140°F (60°C) for 20 minutes or at 149°F for at least three minutes.

All of the above contaminated foods and the “commercial culture of contamination” should induce enough common sense such that Muslims and other people of scripture agree on consuming natural food — foods that have been minimally processed and grown without the use of synthetic fertilizers and pesticides. Other than for meat and poultry, the term *natural* has not been defined legally and therefore has many interpretations. The “natural” food label is a strong selling point, and food producers have “capitalized” on consumer interest. Thus the word *natural* may be used to describe processed foods and synthetic foods and beverages, which sometimes are highly processed and contain preservatives and artificial coloring. A beverage labeled “natural juice” might be completely synthetic, with only the lemon flavor as a non-synthetic ingredient; a product labeled “natural apple pie” may qualify for the claim due to the inclusion of only one natural (unprocessed or non-synthetic) ingredient. The fine print has to be read to determine what is behind the use of the word *natural* on a food label. Socialization and advertising associated with natural food suggests that the food is free from additives like preservatives, emulsifiers, and thickeners, though this is often not the case when the ingredient list is thoroughly scrutinized. The obvious implication here is that the multi-billion dollar food processing industry finds it easier to change its advertising to symbolically address consumer demand than to change its processes to produce substantially healthier food for people to consume. In real time, only the packaging has been finessed but the stuff inside is the same garbage (literally) people have been consuming for decades, and while profits continue to soar for the Krafts and Nestles of the world, for the rest of us, our healthcare costs have become unmanageable because our bodies and minds are breaking down at younger and younger ages with little relief in sight as we are incessantly socialized to believe that “food” on grocery shelves with little or no nutritional value is

what we ought to be feeding our families. Consider what Dr. Gary Null says about the powerful corporate interests that profit from putting bad food on grocery market shelves, as well as the declining health of consumers,

What actually started the overweight revolution? Most likely, the roots of our current situation began in the 1970s when our national agricultural policy changed from paying farmers to grow only essential crops to encouraging them to grow as much food as they could. Newer fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides, irrigation techniques, and improvements in the capacity of farm equipment allowed farms to become much more productive. As huge amounts of food were grown, the prices plummeted, making it possible for an army of food producers to turn certain crops into gold — *processed foods*.

The number of calories available per person grew by 1,000 calories per day, and we started overeating. Since that time, as a nation we have obliterated our links to a past when people ate three meals a day, prepared food at home, and ate together as a family. Our mantra of everything in moderation has actually come to mean: eat anything that strikes your fancy, whenever you are awake, no matter the nutritional content, and with no regard for the consequences. We don't eat because we are hungry; we eat because we are craving something — whether a specific taste, relief from an uncomfortable feeling, or just because we are starved for nutrients. Yes, any of us (even though we are overweight) are starved for good nutrition; so we overeat the nutritionally deficient foods thinking this will satisfy us. But they never do. We don't buy food, we buy food products that were originally grown in nature but are now so highly processed that they have little relation to their natural origins. We buy things in cardboard boxes, plastic bags, plastic tubs, shrink-wrapped in cellophane on a styrofoam plate —

food-like items that last for months, and in many cases even years, on a shelf or in a freezer.

We build the most modern gourmet kitchens, but ironically most of us don't cook anymore: and when we do cook, we think that "nuking" [irradiating] a cheeseburger and fries or macaroni and cheese etc. in the microwave provides acceptable, health-promoting nutrition. Even more disturbing, we aren't convinced that vegetables and fruits should be consumed on a regular basis because they aren't comparatively convenient, unless of course they come in a can and are essentially devoid of any nutritional benefits. It's comical to some to consider that they might actually have to wash, peel, or cook a vegetable. Moreover, we have grown discontent with drinking water from public fountains (which is actually understandable on one level); however, we are instead demanding 16, 20, and 24oz. highly sweetened beverages at our disposal 24 hours a day. And does anyone remember when it used to be considered improper, and a sign of poor manners, to eat in public? Now, we can't go outside without our favorite fructose-saturated sports drink, and we walk and drive around with our hands full of comestibles much of the time.

Food preparation is routinely outsourced such that schools, hospitals, and nursing homes rarely offer any fresh food. The meals purchased by schools for our children are prepared far away and far in advance of consumption. Schools are of particular concern, not only because our children receive around 50% of their daily calories on school grounds, but because schools are where our children learn. In this case, however, they are learning habits, including relying on vending machines for food, that will keep them obese and unhealthy for the rest of their lives. Who is leading the charge to push industrial foods on kids rather than supplying what is healthy? Multinational corporations like ConAgra and

Schwan. Making matters worse, our government representatives — so deeply and incestuously tied to political donations — have lost all common sense regarding the matter. It was just last November (2011) that Congress announced that frozen pizza qualified as a vegetable. Not only did they vote to rebuke new USDA [United States Department of Agriculture] guidelines for school lunches that would have increased the amount of fresh fruit and vegetables in school cafeterias, they declared that the sugar-laden tomato paste (on the nutritionally bankrupt white-flour frozen pizza dough) qualified as a vegetable. Have we gone completely insane? Can you begin now to see the depth of this insanity, and how it is affecting our nation's health?

A recent article appearing in the *Huffington Post* noted the brilliance of the food industry — not only for creating these industrial foods, but for convincing us that processed food is *all* that children want, which may now be true. Sadly, the industry spends billions of dollars on concocting highly addictive taste profiles that literally change children's palates. The author noted,

...eating sugary, salty, and fatty food products adjusts taste preference to the point that simple, real foods taste bland and unappealing... While the food industry insists that it only advertises to children "to influence brand preference," a study published in the journal *Appetite* found that the food industry works to "fundamentally change children's taste palates to increase their liking of highly processed and less nutritious foods."

This is criminal in my opinion, and I feel saddened that we as a nation continue to fall prey to the deceit and trickery of corporations that care about one thing alone: *profits*. It is no secret that schools across America are

financially stressed. Not only is it common for parents and teachers now to pay for school supplies, it has become necessary for school systems to entertain income from other sources — and the food industry is happy to “help.” Traditional school lunch is no longer the only option. Now children are presented with a food court full of “competitive food” options like pizza, hot dogs, tater tots, french fries, and sugary beverages including soda at breakfast and lunch. Schools view feeding children as a financial advantage, and necessary to their survival. They have placed vending machines in the hallways and teacher lounges so that packaged foods are available throughout the day. However, now that local and state governments are getting involved (albeit slowly) in the battle, appropriate changes are occurring — and working. A report in the *New York Times Health & Science* section in May of this year [2013] spoke about California’s success in the fight against obesity in our youth. Just five years after they began cracking down on junk food in school cafeterias, it was stated that high school students there consume fewer calories (approximately 160 calories per student per day) and less fat and sugar at school than students in other states. Researchers believe that California’s wholesale shift is helping: they have not only eliminated sweets and candy bars; they have banned soda, and legislated nutritional guidelines for so-called “competitive foods.”

The problem in schools is magnified by the dismantling of physical education programs over the past 20 years. According to recent research conducted by a University of Georgia professor and published in the *Journal of Teaching in Physical Education*, schools in all 50 states are uniformly failing at implementing state mandates for school-based physical education. The results found [that] only six states mandate the appropriate guidelines — 150 minutes each week — for elementary school physi-

cal education, which boils down to only 30 minutes per day. Moreover, only two states mandate the appropriate amount for middle schools, and none at the high school level — 255 minutes weekly for both. He cites the lack of national mandates and federal judicial support on state mandates coupled with budgetary challenges as the primary reasons for state noncompliance. It doesn't help that "an estimated 40 percent of US school districts either have eliminated recess or are considering eliminating it," according to an article published by the PTA. Another article published recently in *the Atlantic* said, "Even more important, as play and recess have declined over the past half-century, anxiety, depression, suicide, feelings of helplessness, and narcissism have increased, suggesting a connection between play and children's long-term mental health. Findings by the CDC [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention] are similar; according to a 2010 report, "...studies found one or more positive associations between recess and indicators of cognitive skills, attitudes, and academic behavior."

Corporations also continue to add to the problem *outside* of schools by offering cleverly disguised "reward" programs for ice cream and other junk foods in partnership with organizations and initiatives focussed on, of all things, child safety! Both McDonald's and Dairy Queen are regular participants in a program that advocates helmet use during bicycling, where local, on-duty police officers distribute coupons to obedient children. Having, of all people, police officers — natural role models who enjoy an extremely high social rank and authority in the minds of youngsters — distribute these coupons has a tremendous psychological impact, and fiscal one too. After all, what child wouldn't follow through on an offer extended by a police officer, and continue to frequent these fast food outlets throughout life because a police officer encouraged them to at a very young age? What an

incredibly creative, insidious, and cost-effective way (using government services funded by taxpayers) for these corporations to pedal their unhealthy fare to budding lifelong customers.

Bombarded by ceaseless advertising for the interest of increasing corporate profits by way of lifelong patients, as in the case of arthritis, we have become a nation out of control. The food industry spends \$1.6 billion a year in predatory food advertising to our children alone. There is relentless peer pressure to consume these industrial foods and beverages, and the media and our health professionals act as if all food items are the same: "there are no bad foods," we are often told. So you won't ever hear what's wrong with energy drinks, bagels, or egg, sausage and cheese sandwiches on white bread...

As we have seen, it's not only the corporations that we know — like McDonald's and Dairy Queen — behind the advertising and media front, but the meat and dairy farmers and manufacturers, processed food manufacturers (including chemical and flavoring companies), the pharmaceutical and medical industries, and our government. We simply don't recognize that these factions and the media that they own are complicit in putting us exactly where they want us. We have been conditioned like Pavlovian dogs, and don't stop to question why we have [chronic lifestyle diseases]. We also are not questioning what and how much are we eating, and why our consumption is making us sick, and even killing us.

The more our bodies break down, the more we become beholden to Big Pharma as well as the medical and surgical establishment to keep us alive (but not healthy) with medications for these chiefly lifestyle diseases. We are persuaded by the constant reinforcement of the propaganda machine to buy food items that we don't need; subliminal advertising creates desire. There are few rules for advertising claims and no standards:

you can make virtually any declaration about a processed food with no proof, as long as the nutritional label on the reverse of the package provides certain required information — albeit in small print — and the few rules of the game are adhered to. An example of the ludicrousness in food advertising is a fat-free spray-on oil where the only ingredient is 100% fat! Other processed “fat-free” foods are [so] laden with sugar and chemicals that they have been identified by most nutritionists as a serious health risk...

Many of you may remember the beef industry’s response to Oprah Winfrey in 1996 when she expressed her opinion on her popular television show about the dangers of eating beef. Trampling on the First Amendment (the right to freedom of speech), the beef industry took her to court. How was it that they were able to sue Oprah? Because in 1995, the state of Texas passed legislation making it illegal to disparage perishable food products. In the end, after a long and drawn-out battle over six years, Oprah triumphed — but only because of her vast financial reserves, which allowed her to mount an adequate defense. Did she say anything that was inaccurate or untrue about the dangers of beef? No, but the truth doesn’t count for much in this game. The evidence is that as individuals we are largely powerless to fight the influence of the food industry, supported by unethical legislators, to break the stranglehold it has on what is available to us as food in America.

Indeed we are dealing with a monstrous, intricately woven system of collusion. In 2007, a few intrepid researchers set out to do a study on how funding resources affect the nutritional information that is published in scientific articles. They looked at funding sources of four types of scientific studies dealing with soft drinks, juice, and milk published between 1999 and 2003. What they found was that scientific articles about these particular

beverages funded by industry were four to eight times more likely to be favorable to the financial interests of the sponsors. Furthermore, none of the interventional studies supported by the beverage industry, which investigated likelihood of certain responses to consumption of certain beverages, such as gaining weight or developing diabetes, had unfavorable conclusions.

Beginning in 2009, the Interagency Working Group (IWG) was assembled to examine the issue of junk food marketing to children and to develop voluntary guidelines restricting this practice in response to the current and growing obesity epidemic. The group determined that their recommendations should support two basic goals: first, that foods marketed to children should provide nutrients from healthy food groups, such as fruits, vegetables, and whole grains; and second, that foods marketed to children should be made with minimal amounts of unhealthy ingredients including saturated fat, trans-fats, sugar, and sodium.

Initially, the IWG seemed to have broad-based bipartisan support, and they released their proposed guidelines in April 2011. While comments from consumers and public health groups strongly supported the proposed guidelines, the food industry put pressure on legislators through monetary contributions and lobbying from front groups falsely claiming to represent consumers. An eventual tsunami of outrage poured forth toward the IWG from both the Republican and Democratic legislators compensated by the food industry. They expressed outrage that the IWG intended to discriminate against an industry that "has made extensive voluntary strides" to reduce advertising to children. In the end, food industry money turned the tide. Not only was the plan scrapped, but the IWG was prohibited from working on the guidelines without complying with certain stringent requirements in the omnibus spending bill passed in December 2011.

The requirements, which would have taken many years' worth of analysis and reports, effectively quashed the effort to limit junk food marketing to children. The seemingly high price of the reported \$37 million spent by the food industry to oppose the IWG recommendations was clearly well worth the price.

The relentless advertising of unhealthy food products (including those pretended to be healthy) to children and adults continues because selling products that are a cause of obesity and chronic poor health is, in fact, a gold mine for the multinational corporations that manufacture them, and for the medical system that is assigned to fix the problems they create. If you are suffering from [chronic disease], you are also likely suffering from the influence of these powerful players, as well as a medical system that by nature of its focus to eradicate symptoms can only fail you.⁵⁴

And then there is what is deceitfully called "natural meat." According to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), meat or poultry labeled "natural" has not been processed more than in usual kitchen practice. This refers to procedures that can be performed in the kitchen: washing, shredding, chipping, grating, grinding, chopping, mixing, and cooking. Natural meat must come from animals raised without hormones or at least not exposed to feedlot growth stimulants and antibiotics (to fatten livestock faster than it would normally by consuming a grass diet) later than 60 days before slaughter. The "natural beef" label does not guarantee the meat is absolutely free of antibiotics and growth factors because some producers feed hormones and antibiotics up to 60 days before slaughter. This time is not adequate to completely clear chemical residues from some animals, and then there is no telling (because very little research has been done in this area, or has been deliberately prevented by the meat processing monopolies) how these commercial chemicals actually altered the tissue that would be later consumed by humans. In 1991, natural beef represented

approximately 5% of all beef sold in the United States.⁵⁵ In his book, *Fast Food Nation*, Eric Schlosser talks about the dark side of the American meatpacking industry and the corporate “trade-offs” that have led to the contamination of the meat sold in grocery stores, ultimately consumed by the average American,

The industrialization of cattle-raising and meatpacking over the past two decades has completely altered how beef is produced — and the towns that produce it. Responding to the demands of the fast food and supermarket chains, the meatpacking giants have cut costs by cutting wages. They have turned one of the nation’s best-paying manufacturing jobs into one of the lowest-paying, created a migrant industrial workforce of poor immigrants, tolerated high injury rates, and spawned rural ghettos in the American heartland. Crime, poverty, drug abuse, and homelessness have lately taken root in towns where you’d least expect to find them. The effects of this new meatpacking regime have become as inescapable as the odors that drift from its feedlots, rendering plants, and pools of slaughterhouse waste.

The ConAgra Beef Company runs the nation’s biggest meatpacking complex just a few miles north of downtown Greeley. Weld County, which includes Greeley, earns more money every year from livestock products than any other county in the United States. ConAgra is the largest private employer in Weld County, running a beef slaughterhouse and a sheep slaughterhouse, as well as rendering and processing facilities.

To supply the beef slaughterhouse, ConAgra operates a pair of enormous feedlots. Each of them can hold up to one hundred thousand head of cattle. At times the animals are crowded so closely together it looks like a sea of cattle, a mooing, moving mass of brown and white fur that goes on for acres. These cattle don’t eat blue grama and buffalo grass off the prairie. During the three months

before slaughter, they eat grain dumped into long concrete troughs that resemble highway dividers. The grain fattens the cattle quickly, aided by the anabolic steroids implanted in their ear. A typical steer will consume more than three thousand pounds of grain during its stay at a feedlot, just to gain four hundred pounds in weight. The process involves a fair amount of waste. Each steer deposits about fifty pounds of urine and manure every day. Unlike human waste, the manure is not sent to a treatment plant. It is dumped into pits, huge pools of excrement that the industry calls “lagoons.” The amount of waste left by the cattle that pass through Weld County is staggering. The two Monfort feedlots outside Greeley produce more excrement than the cities of Denver, Boston, Atlanta, and St. Louis — combined...

For more than a century... Chicago reigned as the meatpacking capital of the world. The Beef Trust was born there, the major meatpacking firms were headquartered there, and roughly forty thousand people [40,000] were employed there in a square-mile meat district anchored by the Union Stockyards. Refrigerated sides of beef were shipped from Chicago not only throughout the United States, but also throughout Europe. At the dawn of the twentieth century, Upton Sinclair considered Chicago’s Packingtown to be “the greatest aggregation of labor and capital ever gathered in one place.” It was in his view the supreme achievement of American capitalism, as well as its greatest disgrace.

The old Chicago slaughterhouses were usually brick buildings, four or five stories high. Cattle were herded up wooden ramps to the top floor, where they were struck on the head with a sledgehammer, slaughtered, then disassembled by skilled workers. The animals eventually left the building on the ground floor, coming out as sides of beef, cans of beef, or boxes of sausage ready to be loaded into railcars.

The working conditions in these meatpacking plants were brutal. In *The Jungle* (1906) Upton Sinclair described a litany of horrors: severe back and shoulder injuries, lacerations, amputations, exposure to dangerous chemicals, and memorably, a workplace accident in which a man fell into a vat and got turned into lard. The plant kept running, and the lard was sold to unsuspecting consumers. Human beings, Sinclair argued, had been made “cogs in the great packing machine,” easily replaced and entirely disposable. President Theodore Roosevelt ordered an independent investigation of *The Jungle*'s sensational details. The accuracy of the book was confirmed by federal investigators, who found that Chicago's meatpacking workers labored “under conditions that are entirely unnecessary and unpardonable, and which are a constant menace not only to their own health, but to the health of those who use the food products prepared by them.”

The popular outrage inspired by *The Jungle* led Congress to enact food safety legislation in 1906. Little was done, however, to improve the lives of packinghouse workers, whose misfortune had inspired Upton Sinclair to write the book. “I aimed for the public's heart,” he later wrote in his autobiography, “and by accident I hit it in the stomach.” For the next thirty years, unions battled to gain representation among Chicago's stockyard and slaughterhouse workers, who were mainly eastern European immigrants. The large meatpacking firms used company spies, blacklists, and African-American strikebreakers to thwart organizing efforts. Nevertheless, most of Chicago's packinghouse workers had gained union representation by the end of the Depression. After World War II, their wages greatly improved, soon exceeding the national average for workers in manufacturing. Meatpacking was still a backbreaking, dangerous job, but for many it was also a well-paid and desirable

one. It provided a stable, middle-class income. Swift & Company, the largest firm in the industry until the early 1960s, was also the last of the big five meatpackers to remain privately controlled. Much like Ken Monfort, Harold Swift ran the company founded by his father with a paternalistic concern for workers. Swift & Company paid the industry's highest wages, guaranteed long-term job security, worked closely with union officials to address worker grievances, and provided bonuses, pensions, and other benefits.

In 1960 Currier J. Holman and A.D. Anderson, two former Swift executives, decided to start their own meatpacking company, convinced that by slashing costs they could compete with the industry giants. The following year Iowa Beef Packers [IBP] opened its first slaughterhouse — a meat factory that in its own way proved as influential as the first Speedee Service McDonald's in San Bernardino. Applying the same labor principles to meatpacking that the McDonald brothers had applied to making hamburgers, Holman and Anderson designed a production system for their slaughterhouse in Denison, Iowa, that eliminated the need for skilled workers. The new IBP plant was a one-story structure with a disassembly line. Each worker stood in one spot along the line, performing the same simple task over and over again, making the same knife cut thousands of times during an eight-hour shift. The gains that meatpacking workers had made since the days of *The Jungle* stood in the way of IBP's new system, whose success depended upon access to a cheap and powerless workforce. At the dawn of the fast food era, IBP became a meatpacking company with a fast food mentality, obsessed with throughput, efficiency, centralization, and control. "We've tried to take the skill out of every step," A. D. Anderson later boasted.

In addition to creating a mass production system that employed a de-skilled workforce, IBP put its new slaugh-

terhouses in rural areas close to the feedlots — and far away from the urban strongholds of the nation's labor unions. The new interstate highway system made it possible to rely upon trucks, instead of railroads, to ship meat. In 1967 IBP opened a large plant in Dakota City, Nebraska, that not only slaughtered cattle but also “fabricated” them into smaller cuts of meat — into primals (chucks, loins, ribs, rounds) and subprimals (such as chuck rolls). Instead of shipping whole sides of beef, IBP shipped these smaller cuts, vacuum-sealed and plastic-wrapped, as “boxed beef.” This new way of marketing beef enabled supermarkets to fire most of their skilled, unionized butchers. It also left IBP with a great deal of leftover bones, blood, and scraps of meat that could be rendered into profitable byproducts such as dog food. IBP soon added “grinders” to its plants, machinery that made hamburger meat in enormous quantities, driving small processors and wholesalers out of business. The company's low wages and new production techniques transformed the entire beef industry, from the feedlot to the butcher counter.

The IBP revolution was guided by a hard, unsentimental view of the world. Amid a packinghouse culture that valued toughness, Currier J. Holman took pride in being tougher than anyone else. He didn't like unions and didn't hesitate to do whatever seemed necessary to break them. IBP should always conduct business, Holman argued, as though it were waging war. When workers at the IBP plant in Dakota City went on strike in 1969, Holman hired scabs [a person who refuses to strike or to join a labor union and who takes over the job responsibilities of a striking worker] to replace them. The striking workers responded by firing a bullet through Holman's office window, killing a suspected company spy, and bombing the home of IBP's general counsel. Confronted with a real war, Holman sought assistance from an unusually powerful ally.

In the spring of 1970 Holman and three other top IBP executives held secret meetings in New York City with Moe Steinman, a “labor consultant” who had close ties with La Cosa Nostra [organized crime]. Unionized butchers in New York were blocking the sale of IBP’s boxed beef, out of solidarity with the striking workers and fear for their own jobs. IBP was eager to ship its products to the New York metropolitan area, the nation’s largest market for beef. Moe Steinman offered to help end the butchers’ boycott and in return demanded a five-cent “commission” on every ten pounds of beef that IBP sold in New York. IBP planned to ship hundreds of millions of pounds of beef to New York City every year. Currier J. Holman agreed to pay the mob its five-cent commission, and the leaders of New York’s butcher union promptly withdrew their objections to IBP’s boxed beef. Shipments of IBP meat were soon being unloaded in Manhattan.

After a lengthy investigation of mob involvement in the New York City meat business, Currier J. Holman and IBP were tried and convicted in 1974 for bribing union leaders and meat wholesalers. Judge Burton Roberts fined IBP \$7,000, but did not punish Holman with any prison term or fine, noting that bribes were sometimes part of the cost of doing business in New York City. Holman’s links to organized crime, however, extended far beyond the sort of payments that honest New York businessmen were often forced to make. He appointed one of Moe Steinman’s friends to the board of IBP (a man who a decade earlier had been imprisoned for bribing meat inspectors and for selling tainted meat to the U.S. Army) and made Steinman’s son-in-law a group vice president of IBP, head of the company’s processing division (even though the son-in-law, in Judge Roberts’ words, “knew virtually nothing about the meat business”). And Holman forced out four top IBP executives who opposed

dealing with organized crime figures. Subsequent investigations by *Forbes* and the *Wall Street Journal* cited IBP as a prime example of how a mainstream corporation could be infiltrated by the mob.

The relentless low-cost competition from IBP presented old-line Chicago meatpackers with a stark choice: go west or go out of business. Instead of symbolizing democracy and freedom, going west meant getting cheap labor. One by one, the packinghouses in Chicago closed down, and slaughterhouses were built in rural states hostile toward labor unions. The new meatpacking plants in Iowa, Kansas, Texas, Colorado, and Nebraska followed IBP's example, paying wages that were sometimes more than 50 percent lower than what union workers earned in Chicago...

The Reagan administration [1981–1988] did not oppose the disappearance of hundreds of small meatpacking firms. On the contrary, it opposed using antitrust laws to stop the giant meatpackers. In 1986 the US Supreme Court overturned the earlier ruling and approved the merger of America's second- and third-largest meatpacking companies. The following year, Monfort agreed to a friendly takeover by ConAgra. "It seemed to me that if the industry was going to be concentrated," Ken Monfort explained, "there should be at least three large players instead of just two." As part of the deal, he became a top executive at the company, head of the ConAgra Red Meat division, and his family received about \$270 million in ConAgra stock.

By purchasing Monfort, ConAgra became the biggest meatpacker in the world. Today it is the largest food-service supplier in North America. In addition to being the number-one producer of french fries (through its Lamb Weston subsidiary), ConAgra is also the nation's largest sheep and turkey processor, the largest distributor of agricultural chemicals, the second-largest manufacturer of

frozen food, the second-largest flour miller, the third-largest chicken and pork processor, as well as a leading seed producer, feed producer, and commodity futures trader. The company sells its food under about one hundred consumer brand names, including Hunt's, Armour, La Choy, Country Pride, Swiss Miss, Orville Redenbacher's, Reddi-Wip, Taste O'Sea, Knott's Berry Farm, Hebrew National, and Healthy Choice. Although few Americans have heard of ConAgra, they are likely to eat at least one of its products every day.

Twenty years ago, ConAgra — a combination of two Latin words whose intended meaning is “partnership with the land” — was an obscure Nebraska company with annual revenues of about \$500 million. Last year [2000] ConAgra's revenues exceeded \$25 billion. The company's phenomenal growth over the past two decades was driven by the entrepreneurial spirit of its longtime chief executive, Charles “Mike” Harper. When Harper took over ConAgra in 1974, it was losing money, the market value of its stock was \$10 million, and the value of its debt was \$156 million. According to the company's official history, *ConAgra Who?* (1989), Harper promptly instituted a new corporate philosophy. “Harper told each general manager that he'd been given a bag of money,” the company history explains, “and that at the end of the year he'd be expected to return it — plus a little extra.” He gave each of his top executives a personalized, inspirational plaque. On it was a cartoon of two vultures sitting in a tree. “Patience, my a--,” one vulture says to the other. “I'm gonna go kill somebody.”

The intense pressure to return a bigger bag of money every year has prompted a number of ConAgra employees to break the law. In 1989, ConAgra was found guilty in federal court of having systematically cheated chicken growers in Alabama. During an eight-year period, 45,256 truckloads of full-grown birds were deliberately mis-

weighed at a ConAgra processing plant in the state. ConAgra employees tampered with trucks and scales to make the birds seem lighter. The company was forced to pay \$17.2 million in damages for the fraud.

In 1995, ConAgra agreed to pay \$13.6 million to settle a class-action lawsuit that accused the company of having conspired with seven other firms to fix prices in the catfish industry. For more than a decade, ConAgra executives allegedly spoke on the phone to, or met at motels with, their ostensible rivals to set catfish prices nationwide. According to the plaintiffs in the case, ConAgra's price-fixing scheme gouged independent wholesalers, small retailers, and consumers...

As in so many other aspects of meatpacking, IBP was a trailblazer in recruiting migrant labor. The company was among the first to recognize that recent immigrants would work for lower wages than American citizens — and would be more reluctant to join unions. To sustain the flow of new workers into IBP slaughterhouses, the company has for years dispatched recruiting teams to poor communities throughout the United States. It has recruited refugees and asylum-seekers from Laos and Bosnia. It has recruited homeless people living at shelters in New York, New Jersey, California, North Carolina, and Rhode Island. It has hired buses to import these workers from thousands of miles away. IBP now maintains a labor office in Mexico City, runs ads on Mexican radio stations offering jobs in the United States, and operates a bus service from rural Mexico to the heartland of America.

The Immigration and Naturalization Service estimates that about one-quarter of all meatpacking workers in Iowa and Nebraska are illegal immigrants. The proportion at some slaughterhouses can be much higher. Spokesmen for IBP and the ConAgra Beef Company adamantly deny that they in any way seek illegal immigrants. "We do not knowingly hire undocumented work-

ers,” an IBP executive told me. “IBP supports INS efforts to enforce the law and do[es] not want to employ people who are not authorized to work in the United States.” Nevertheless, the recruiting efforts of the American meatpacking industry now target some of the most impoverished and most vulnerable groups in the Western Hemisphere. “If they’ve got a pulse,” one meatpacking executive joked to the *Omaha World-Herald* in 1998, “we’ll take an application”...

In January of 1987, Mike Harper told the newly elected governor of Nebraska, Kay Orr, that ConAgra wanted a number of tax breaks — or would move its headquarters out of Omaha [a city in Nebraska]. The company had been based in the state for almost seventy years, and Nebraska’s tax rates were among the lowest in the United States. Nevertheless, a small group of ConAgra executives soon gathered on a Saturday morning at Harper’s house, sat around his kitchen table, and came up with the basis for legislation that rewrote Nebraska’s tax code. The bills, drafted largely by ConAgra, sought to lower the state taxes paid not only by large corporations, but also by wealthy executives. Mike Harper personally stood to gain about \$295,000 from the proposed 30 percent reduction in the maximum tax rate on personal income. He was an avid pilot, and the new legislation also provided tax deductions for ConAgra’s corporate jets. A number of state legislators called Harper’s demands “blackmail.” But the legislature granted the tax breaks, afraid that Nebraska might lose one of its largest private employers. Harper later described how easy it would have been for ConAgra to move elsewhere: “Some Friday night, we turn out the lights — click, click, click — back up the trucks and be gone by Monday morning.”

IBP also benefited enormously from the legislation. Its corporate headquarters was located in Dakota City, Nebraska. One study has suggested that after the revision

of the state's tax code every new job that ConAgra and IBP created there was backed by a taxpayer subsidy of between \$13,000 and \$23,000. Thanks to the 1987 legislation, IBP paid no corporate taxes in Nebraska for the next decade. Its executives paid state income taxes at a maximum rate of 7 percent. Despite all these financial benefits, IBP moved its headquarters out of Nebraska in 1997, relocating in South Dakota, a state with no corporate taxes — and no personal income tax...

The "IBP revolution" has been directly responsible for many of the hazards that meatpacking workers now face. One of the leading determinants of the injury rate at a slaughterhouse today is the speed of the disassembly line. The faster it runs, the more likely that workers will get hurt. The old meatpacking plants in Chicago slaughtered about 50 cattle an hour. Twenty years ago, new plants in the High Plains slaughtered about 175 cattle an hour. Today some plants slaughter up to 400 cattle an hour — about half a dozen animals every minute, sent down a single production line, carved by workers desperate not to fall behind. While trying to keep up with the flow of meat, workers often neglect to resharpen their knives and thereby place more stress on their bodies. As the pace increases, so does the risk of accidental cuts and stabbings. "I could always tell the line speed," a former Monfort nurse told me, "by the number of people with lacerations coming into my office." People usually cut themselves; nevertheless, everyone on the line tries to stay alert. Meatpackers often work within inches of each other, wielding large knives. A simple mistake can cause a serious injury. A former IBP worker told me about boning knives suddenly flying out of hands and ricocheting off of machinery. "They're very flexible," she said, "and they'll spring on you... zwing, and they're gone."

Much like french fry factories, beef slaughterhouses often operate at profit margins as low as a few pennies a

pound. The three meatpacking giants — ConAgra, IBP, and Excel — try to increase their earnings by maximizing the volume of production at each plant. Once a slaughterhouse is up and running, fully staffed, the profits it will earn are directly related to the speed of the line. A faster pace means higher profits. Market pressures now exert a perverse influence on the management of beef plants: the same factors that make these slaughterhouses relatively inefficient (the lack of mechanization, the reliance on human labor) encourage companies to make them even more dangerous (by speeding up the pace).

The unrelenting pressure of trying to keep up with the line has encouraged widespread methamphetamine use among meatpackers. Workers taking “crank” feel charged and self-confident, ready for anything. Supervisors have been known to sell crank to their workers or to supply it free in return for certain favors, such as working a second shift. Workers who use methamphetamine may feel energized and invincible, but are actually putting themselves at much greater risk of having an accident. For obvious reasons, a modern slaughterhouse is not a safe place to be high.

In the days when labor unions were strong, workers could complain about excessive line speeds and injury rates without fear of getting fired. Today only one-third of IBP’s workers belong to a union. Most of the nonunion workers are recent immigrants; many are illegals; and they are generally employed “at will.” That means they can be fired without warning, for just about any reason. Such an arrangement does not encourage them to lodge complaints. Workers who have traveled a great distance for this job, who have families to support, who are earning ten times more an hour in a meatpacking plant than they could possibly earn back home, are wary about speaking out and losing everything. The line speeds and labor costs at IBP’s nonunion plants now set the standard for the rest

of the industry. Every other company must try to produce beef as quickly and cheaply as IBP does; slowing the pace to protect workers can lead to a competitive disadvantage.

Again and again workers told me that they are under tremendous pressure not to report injuries. The annual bonuses of plant foremen and supervisors are often based in part on the injury rate of their workers. Instead of creating a safer workplace, these bonus schemes encourage slaughterhouse managers to make sure that accidents and injuries go unreported. Missing fingers, broken bones, deep lacerations, and amputated limbs are difficult to conceal from authorities. But the dramatic and catastrophic injuries in a slaughterhouse are greatly outnumbered by less visible, though no less debilitating, ailments: torn muscles, slipped disks, pinched nerves.

If a worker agrees not to report an injury, a supervisor will usually shift him or her to an easier job for a while, providing some time to heal. If the injury seems more serious, a Mexican worker is often given the opportunity to return home for a while, to recuperate there, then come back to his or her slaughterhouse job in the United States. Workers who abide by these unwritten rules are treated respectfully; those who disobey are likely to be punished and made an example. As one former IBP worker explained, "They're trying to deter you, period, from going to the doctor."

From a purely economic point of view, injured workers are a drag on profits. They are less productive. Getting rid of them makes a good deal of financial sense, especially when new workers are readily available and inexpensive to train. Injured workers are often given some of the most unpleasant tasks in the slaughterhouse. Their hourly wages are cut. And through a wide variety of unobvious means they are encouraged to quit...

IBP's attitude toward worker safety was hardly unique in the industry, according to Edward Murphy's testimony

before Congress in 1992. Murphy had served as the safety director of the Monfort beef plant in Grand Island. After two workers were killed there in 1991, Monfort fired him. Murphy claimed that he had battled the company for years over safety issues and that Monfort had unfairly made him the scapegoat for its own illegal behavior. The company later paid him an undisclosed sum of money to settle a civil lawsuit over wrongful termination.

Murphy told Congress that during his tenure at the Grand Island plant, Monfort maintained two sets of injury logs, routinely lied to OSHA [Occupational Safety and Hazards Administration], and shredded documents requested by OSHA. He wanted Congress to know that the safety lapses at the plant were not accidental. They stemmed directly from Monfort's corporate philosophy, which Murphy described in these terms: "The first commandment is that only production counts. The employee's duty is to follow orders. Period. As I was repeatedly told, 'Do what I tell you, even if it is illegal... Don't get caught.'"

A lawsuit filed in May of 1998 suggests that little has changed since IBP was caught keeping two sets of injury logs more than a decade ago. Michael D. Ferrell, a former vice president at IBP, contends that the real blame for the high injury rate at the company lies not with the workers, supervisors, nurses, safety directors, or plant managers, but with IBP's top executives...

For years the large meatpacking companies have managed to avoid the sort of liability routinely imposed on the manufacturers of most consumer products. Today the US government can demand the nationwide recall of defective softball bats, sneakers, stuffed animals, and foam-rubber toy cows. But it cannot order a meatpacking company to remove contaminated, potentially lethal ground beef from fast food kitchens and supermarket shelves. The unusual power of the large meatpacking

firms has been sustained by their close ties and sizable donations to Republican members of Congress. It has also been made possible by a widespread lack of awareness about how many Americans suffer from food poisoning every year and how these illnesses actually spread.

The newly recognized food-borne pathogens tend to be carried and shed by apparently healthy animals. Food tainted by these organisms has most likely come in contact with an infected animal's stomach contents or manure, during slaughter or subsequent processing. A nationwide study published by the USDA in 1996 found that 7.5 percent of the ground beef samples taken at processing plants were contaminated with *Salmonella*, 11.7 percent were contaminated with *Listeria monocytogenes*, 30 percent were contaminated with *Staphylococcus aureus*, and 53.3 percent were contaminated with *Clostridium perfringens*. All of these pathogens can make people sick; food poisoning caused by *Listeria* generally requires hospitalization and proves fatal in about one out of every five cases. In the USDA study 78.6 percent of the ground beef contained microbes that are spread primarily by fecal material. The medical literature on the causes of food poisoning is full of euphemisms and dry scientific terms: coliform levels, aerobic plate counts, sorbitol, MacConkey agar, and so on. Behind them lies a simple explanation for why eating a hamburger can now make you seriously ill: there is sh-- in the meat...

Escherichia coli 0157:H7 is a mutated version of a bacterium found abundantly in the human digestive system. Most *E. coli* bacteria help us digest food, synthesize vitamins, and guard against dangerous organisms. *E. coli* 0157:H7, on the other hand, can release a powerful toxin — called a “verotoxin” or a “Shiga toxin” — that attacks the lining of the intestine. Some people who are infected with *E. coli* 0157:H7 do not become ill. Others suffer mild diarrhea. In most cases, severe abdominal cramps

are followed by watery, then bloody, diarrhea that subsides within a week or so. Sometimes the diarrhea is accompanied by vomiting and a low-grade fever.

In about 4 percent of reported *E. coli* 0157:H7 cases, the Shiga toxins enter the bloodstream, causing hemolytic uremia syndrome (HUS), which can lead to kidney failure, anemia, internal bleeding, and the destruction of vital organs. The Shiga toxins can cause seizures, neurological damage, and strokes. About 5 percent of the children who develop HUS are killed by it. Those who survive are often left with permanent disabilities, such as blindness or brain damage...

Antibiotics have proven ineffective in treating illnesses caused by *E. coli* 0157:H7. Indeed the use of antibiotics may make such illnesses worse by killing off the pathogen and prompting a sudden release of its Shiga toxins. At the moment, little can be done for people with life-threatening *E. coli* 0157:H7 infections, aside from giving them fluids, blood transfusions, and dialysis.

Efforts to eradicate *E. coli* 0157:H7 have been complicated by the fact that it is an extraordinarily hearty microbe that is easy to transmit. *E. coli* 0157:H7 is resistant to acid, salt, and chlorine. It can live in fresh water or seawater. It can live on kitchen countertops for days and in moist environments for weeks. It can withstand freezing. It can survive heat up to 160 degrees Fahrenheit. To be infected by most food-borne pathogens, such as *Salmonella*, you have to consume a fairly large dose — at least a million organisms. An infection with *E. coli* 0157:H7 can be caused by as few as five organisms. A tiny uncooked particle of hamburger meat can contain enough of the pathogen to kill you...

The most common cause of food-borne outbreaks has been the consumption of undercooked ground beef. But *E. coli* 0157:H7 outbreaks have also been caused by contaminated bean sprouts, salad greens, cantaloupe, salami,

raw milk, and unpasteurized apple cider. All of those foods most likely had come in contact with cattle manure, though the pathogen may also be spread by the feces of deer, dogs, horses, and flies...

Some herds of American cattle may have been infected with *E. coli* 0157:H7 decades ago. But the recent changes in how cattle are raised, slaughtered, and processed have created an ideal means for the pathogen to spread. The problem begins in today's vast feedlots. A government health official, who prefers not to be named, compared the sanitary conditions in a modern feedlot to those in a crowded European city during the Middle Ages, when people dumped their chamber pots out the window, raw sewage ran in the streets, and epidemics raged. The cattle now packed into feedlots get little exercise and live amid pools of manure. "You shouldn't eat dirty food and dirty water," the official told me. "But we still think we can give animals dirty food and dirty water." Feedlots have become an extremely efficient mechanism for "recirculating the manure," which is unfortunate, since *E. coli* 0157:H7 can replicate in cattle troughs and survive in manure for up to ninety days.

Far from their natural habitat, the cattle in feedlots become more prone to all sorts of illnesses. And what they are being fed often contributes to the spread of disease. The rise in grain prices has encouraged the feeding of less expensive materials to cattle, especially substances with a high protein content that accelerate growth. About 75 percent of the cattle in the United States were routinely fed livestock wastes — the rendered remains of dead sheep and dead cattle — until August of 1997. They were also fed millions of dead cats and dead dogs every year, purchased from animal shelters. The FDA [Food and Drug Administration] banned such practices after evidence from Great Britain suggested that they were responsible for a widespread outbreak of bovine spongi-

form encephalopathy (BSE), also known as “mad cow disease.” Nevertheless, current FDA regulations allow dead pigs and dead horses to be rendered into cattle feed, along with dead poultry. The regulations not only allow cattle to be fed dead poultry, they allow poultry to be fed dead cattle. Americans who spent more than six months in the United Kingdom during the 1980s are now forbidden to donate blood, in order to prevent the spread of BSE’s human variant, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease. But cattle blood is still put into the feed given to American cattle. Steven P. Bjerklie, a former editor of the trade journal *Meat & Poultry*, is appalled by what goes into cattle feed these days. “Goddamn it, these cattle are ruminants,” Bjerklie says. “They’re designed to eat grass and, maybe, grain. I mean, they have four stomachs for a reason — to eat products that have a high cellulose content. They are not designed to eat other animals.”

The waste products from poultry plants, including the sawdust and old newspapers used as litter, are also being fed to cattle. A study published a few years ago in *Preventive Medicine* notes that in Arkansas alone, about 3 million pounds of chicken manure were fed to cattle in 1994. According to Dr. Neal D. Bernard, who heads the Physicians Committee for Responsible Medicine, chicken manure may contain dangerous bacteria such as *Salmonella* and *Campylobacter*, parasites such as tapeworms and *Giardia lamblia*, antibiotic residues, arsenic, and heavy metals.

The pathogens from infected cattle are spread not only in feedlots, but also at slaughterhouses and hamburger grinders. The slaughterhouse tasks most likely to contaminate meat are the removal of an animal’s hide and the removal of its digestive system. The hides are now pulled off by machine; if a hide has been inadequately cleaned, chunks of dirt and manure may fall from it onto the meat. Stomachs and intestines are still pulled

out of cattle by hand; if the job is not performed carefully, the contents of the digestive system may spill everywhere. The increased speed of today's production lines makes the task much more difficult. A single worker at a "gut table" may eviscerate sixty cattle an hour. Performing the job properly takes a fair amount of skill. A former IBP "gutter" told me that it took him six months to learn how to pull out the stomach and tie off the intestines without spillage. At best, he could gut two hundred consecutive cattle without spilling anything. Inexperienced gutters spill manure far more often. At the IBP slaughterhouse in Lexington, Nebraska, the hourly spillage rate at the gut table has run as high as 20 percent, with stomach contents splattering one out of five carcasses.

The consequences of a single error are quickly multiplied as hundreds of carcasses quickly move down the line. Knives are supposed to be cleaned and disinfected every few minutes, something that workers in a hurry tend to forget. A contaminated knife spreads germs to everything it touches. The overworked, often illiterate workers in the nation's slaughterhouses do not always understand the importance of good hygiene. They sometimes forget that this meat will eventually be eaten. They drop meat on the floor and then place it right back on the conveyer belt. They cook bite-sized pieces of meat in their sterilizers, as snacks, thereby rendering the sterilizers ineffective. They are directly exposed to a wide variety of pathogens in the meat, become infected, and inadvertently spread disease.

A recent USDA study found that during the winter about 1 percent of the cattle at feedlots carry *E. coli* 0157:H7 in their gut. The proportion rises to as much as 50 percent during the summer. Even if you assume that only 1 percent are infected, that means three or four cattle bearing the microbe are eviscerated at a large slaughterhouse every hour. The odds of widespread contamination

are raised exponentially when the meat is processed into ground beef. A generation ago, local butchers and wholesalers made hamburger meat out of leftover scraps. Ground beef was distributed locally, and was often made from cattle slaughtered locally. Today large slaughterhouses and grinders dominate the nationwide production of ground beef. A modern processing plant can produce 800,000 pounds of hamburger a day, meat that will be shipped throughout the United States. A single animal infected with *E. coli* 0157:H7 can contaminate 32,000 pounds of that ground beef.

To make matters worse, the animals used to make about one-quarter of the nation's ground beef — worn-out dairy cattle — are the animals most likely to be diseased and riddled with antibiotic residues. The stresses of industrial milk production make them even more unhealthy than cattle in a large feedlot. Dairy cattle can live as long as forty years, but are often slaughtered at the age of four, when their milk output starts to decline. McDonald's relies heavily on dairy cattle for its hamburger supplies, since the animals are relatively inexpensive, yield low-fat meat, and enable the chain to boast that all its beef is raised in the United States. The days when hamburger meat was ground in the back of a butcher shop, out of scraps from one or two sides of beef, are long gone. Like the multiple sex partners that helped spread the AIDS epidemic, the huge admixture of animals in most American ground beef plants has played a crucial role in spreading *E. coli* 0157:H7. A single fast food hamburger now contains meat from dozens or even hundreds of different cattle.⁵⁶

Insofar as reaching a common understanding about what kind of food is fit to be consumed, coexistence between people of scripture must be prefaced by a consideration of the prevalent food culture, especially in the area of food handling, which is related to

foods that are extensively handled and are not thoroughly reheated before serving. Poor handling practices could be the fertile ground for possible health hazards. Most items in kitchens are not sterile, and manipulation of food will contribute to the risk of food contamination. For example, handlers of raw meat and animal products may be asymptomatic carriers of bacteria and viruses that can cause disease. Staphylococcal infections can be spread easily because they occur frequently in the nose and skin. Many disease-producing microorganisms are transmitted by fecal contamination; Hepatitis A outbreaks in restaurants have been traced to poor personal hygiene of employees. Food handlers with gastric enteritis caused by salmonellosis can spread this disease because of the increased risk of fecal organism contamination with diarrhea. Careful attention to personal cleanliness, the use of disposable gloves, separate work areas and personnel to handle raw and cooked foods, rigorous cleaning schedules, and disinfectant procedures can minimize microbial contamination.⁵⁷

Another Qur'anically questionable treatment of food in the Western commercialized food culture is food irradiation: sterilization of food using radiation. The intent of food irradiation is to extend the shelf life of a food and to kill potentially dangerous microorganisms and insects. Another commercially claimed advantage is that irradiation can also delay ripening and inhibit sprouting of potatoes and wheat. Food irradiation in the United States is currently approved for spices; wheat; fresh fruit like strawberries; fresh vegetables including potatoes; pork; fresh and frozen poultry; uncooked poultry; medical supplies; and some drugs. Irradiation of chickens is permitted in order to kill *Salmonella* bacteria, which can cause food poisoning. Irradiated foods are required to be labeled as such; the warning symbol is a floral emblem.⁵⁸ Prepared foods do not need to be labeled, though they may have been irradiated. Presently, no law requires labeling fast foods.

Advocates argue that irradiation could replace post-harvest pesticides on fruit and vegetables and reduce the threat of *Salmonella* food poisoning in chicken. However, irradiation is turning out to be more expensive and sometimes less effective than predicted. The

only foods being irradiated worldwide are grains (eastern Europe) and potatoes (Japan). Irradiated food, we are told by the pundits of commercialism, does not become radioactive, though it may be exposed to radioactive elements. The irradiation process breaks up molecules in pests as well as in the food itself, and vitamin C, vitamin E, and thiamin are thus destroyed. The high doses of radiation required to kill pests create new substances, called radiolytic products, from the production of molecular fragments (free radicals). These radiolytic products are potential carcinogens, and observers with reasoned judgement about irradiation argue that not enough testing has been done to establish long-term safety of irradiated food.

The presently permitted irradiation dose does not completely sterilize grains and nuts, thus leaving them susceptible to potentially dangerous molds when stored for extended periods. Opponents of food irradiation contend that the *Salmonella* problems should be corrected through more sanitary processing in slaughterhouses and meat-packing facilities. On the other hand, food irradiation is endorsed by the World Health Organization and the US National Academy of Sciences, which believe the production of harmful chemicals is negligible.

With all the scientific jargon that has prostrated itself at the altar of commercial profit and capitalist expansion there is a food culture that is located in this noxious nexus. And still Allah (ﷻ) wants us to interact positively and inclusively with “Jews” and “Christians” whose eating habits may cause them, us, and the rest of the world much harm. And this may be for no other reason than to save them from themselves because they have no moral impulse to check even the toxins that have made it into the commercialized food chain. Food toxins that can adversely affect health can be classified as carcinogens, pharmacologic agents, and agents that block nutrient function. Carcinogens are cancer-causing agents that may occur in the following:

1. moldy grains and nuts (aflatoxin),
2. barbecued meat (benzopyrenes),
3. cabbage (thiourea),
4. certain herbs (alkaloids),

5. certain vegetables and processed meat products (nitrate and nitrites, which are converted to nitrosoamines), and
6. fermentation products (ethyl carbamate) in pickled herring and sauerkraut.⁵⁹

Pharmacologic agents in foods affect organ function and/or cellular metabolism. They include:

1. certain cheeses – tyramine affects the nervous system;
2. nuts and pits from almonds, apples, apricots, cherries, peaches, pears, and plums – these products contain cyanogenetic glycosides that release cyanide and block cellular respiration;
3. mussels and clams – after ingesting the dinoflagellate responsible for red tides, *Gonyaulax*, mussels and clams can cause muscle weakness and paralysis;
4. preserved meat, preserved fish, and certain cheeses – these products may contain nitrosoamines, which cause cancer and liver damage;
5. legumes – these vegetables contain a family of proteins called hemagglutinins, which can rupture red blood cells, damage intestinal mucosa in susceptible people, and slow growth (cooking inactivates hemagglutinin);
6. members of the brassica family including cabbage, kale, brussels sprouts, cauliflower, broccoli, turnips, and rutabaga – these vegetables contain glucosinolates that produce the inorganic ion thiocyanate, which can cause hyperplasia of the thyroid gland or goiter (because it blocks iodine assimilation, required for thyroid hormone formation);
7. certain fish – there are a variety of fish toxins that can poison the nervous system;
8. rhubarb – an acid in rhubarb called oxalic acid binds calcium, and in excess, oxalic acid can contribute to kidney stones; and
9. fungi – a variety of mycotoxins can damage the liver and affect the nervous system.⁶⁰

Certain materials or enzymes in foods interfere with nutrient assimilation or function, but are often inactivated by heating and cooking:

1. beans and soybeans – thorough cooking destroys a protein called trypsin inhibitor, which blocks protein digestion; hemagglutinin, a protein that retards growth; and lipoxidase, an enzyme that destroys vitamin A;
2. cottonseed oil – contains sterculic acid, a fatty acid that interferes with reproduction in experimental animals when consumed in large amounts;
3. fish and clams– raw seafood contains varying amounts of thiaminase, an enzyme that breaks down the B vitamin thiamin;
4. milk – contains lactose (milk sugar), which can create diarrhea in individuals who cannot digest this carbohydrate;
5. cereal grains – contain varying amounts of phytic acid, a phosphate-containing acid that binds calcium and iron;
6. vegetables and fruit – fresh produce contains variable amounts of an enzyme called ascorbic acid oxidate that destroys vitamin C when exposed to air;
7. raw eggs – the egg white contains ovomucoid, a protein that blocks protein digestion, and avidin, a protein that binds biotin and blocks its absorption.⁶¹

All of this “food consciousness” that we obtain from the insights of the Qur’an and scientific discoveries and investigations are no obstacle to a cooperative society with close relations among Muslims, Jews, and Christians.

Ṣalāh Requires Purification from the Calls of Nature

O you who are committed [to Allah]! When you endeavor to commune with Allah, wash your face, and your hands and arms up to the elbows, and pass your [wet] hands lightly over your head, and [wash/pass your (wet) hands over] your feet up to the ankles. And if you are in a state requiring total ablution, purify yourselves. But if you are ill, or are traveling, or have just satisfied a want of nature, or have cohabited with

a woman, and can find no water, then take resort to pure dust, passing therewith lightly over your face and your hands (5:6).

This is the *āyah* in the Qur'an that counsels the committed Muslims about their hygienic and salubrious preparation for the several times a day in which they join their thoughts and feelings with Allah (ﷻ), that is, in the *ṣalāh*. The wording of the *āyah*, "...when you make an effort to commune with Allah, wash your face, and your hands..." infers that this washing and rinsing could be considered as part of the *ṣalāh* itself. Though it is not part of the *ṣalāh* in the strict technical sense, it is nevertheless interrelated to the performance of the *ṣalāh*.

In other words, the *āyah* is alerting the committed Muslims about how they ought to get ready for the performance of the *ṣalāh* when they are *muḥdathīm* — being physically stained by a minor call of nature (urination or defecation) or a major call of nature (copulation or masturbation). The major call of nature requires the Muslim to take a full bath (*ghusl*) with water before he can engage in *ṣalāh*, whereas the minor call of nature only requires him to perform an ablution with water (*wuḍū'*). This *āyah* outlines for all committed Muslims the process of *wuḍū'*.

The "contract" with which this *sūrah* opens takes the Muslims to their daily "contractual communication" with Allah (ﷻ). This flow of ideas and feelings five times a day between Allah (ﷻ) and His complying subjects is an essential component of a Muslim attached to his Sustainer. One of the principle indications that validates our working relationship with Allah (ﷻ) is our *ṣalāh*. It is a daily renewal of our binding agreement with Allah (ﷻ). This frequent interchange between us and Allah (ﷻ), which is called *ṣalāh*, entails a *wuḍū'* — the washing, cleansing, and rinsing of certain parts of the body, all of which are outlined here in this *āyah*. A hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ) relates, "The key to paradise is the *ṣalāh*, and the key to the *ṣalāh* is the *ṭahūr* [pure water]." ⁶²

One of the aftereffects of eating, drinking, and sexual intercourse is the subtle toxicity buildup in our bodies and on our per-

ceptivity. It is not coincidental for this *āyah* about *wuḍū'* to follow the *āyāt* that elucidate what we may eat and to whom we may be betrothed. Therefore, in a sense, *wuḍū'* is necessary to incrementally remove as much as is practical the lifelong buildup process of eating and drinking. In other words, Allah (ﷻ) will be ready for our *ṣalāh* once we express to Him our willingness to rid ourselves of the human and biological slag that result from eating and drinking. The *ṣalāh*, in and of itself, is not satisfactory enough without its performer being in the state of *wuḍū'*. Hence, even though the immediate trigger for our *wuḍū'* is urination or defecation, its distant or root reason is eating and drinking.

It is reported in the books of Hadith that the Prophet (ﷺ) used to go through a *wuḍū'* for every *ṣalāh*, "...the Prophet (ﷺ) performed *wuḍū'* before every *ṣalāh*."⁶³ In one of the narrations, a questioner asked one of the Prophet's (ﷺ) companions, "And you! What did you do?" And the reply was, "We used to carry through with all our *ṣalāhs* on one *wuḍū'* as long as we did not pass water or have a bowel movement."⁶⁴ In Musnad Aḥmad, it is mentioned that the Prophet (ﷺ) was in the habit of conducting a *wuḍū'* for every *ṣalāh*. But then on the Day of Faṭḥ (the day Makkah was liberated) he completed a *wuḍū'* with wiping his leather shoes (*khuffayhi*) and performed his *ṣalāhs* with one *wuḍū'*. He did this in public so that people may notice the admissibility of one *wuḍū'* for multiple *ṣalāhs*.⁶⁵

"Wash your face, and your hands and arms up to the elbows..." The word *ghusl* means to literally run water over something with the purpose of removing any dirt or stain thereon. A *face* is defined as the upper forehead all the way down to the lower chin lengthwise, and the area between the two ears widthwise; the *hands* are the distal extremities of the superior limbs (arms); and the *elbow* is the joint between the forearm and the upper arm.

The first body part to be obligatorily washed in preparation for *ṣalāh* is the face. Does this include the mouth and the inside of the nose? In the practice of the Prophet (ﷺ), it appears that he did rinse out his mouth and nose (gargling and sniffing). Though some say it is obligatory, the majority of *faqīhs* say that gargling and sniffing is not.⁶⁶ In practice, however, it can be said with good confidence

that the majority of Muslims, from the time of the first generation of Muslims in Madinah to the present, have maintained their performance of *wuḍū'* by rinsing their mouths and noses with water. Typically, a Muslim doing his *wuḍū'* gargles by slushing water in his mouth and then expelling it, and snuffles by driving water into his nose and then expelling it by exhaling through the nose.

The second *wuḍū'* obligation is to wash the hands all the way up to the elbows. Are the elbows included in this washing and rinsing? Scholarly opinions differ in this regard with one saying that the elbows are included, and it seems like this is the majority opinion, while the other says the elbows are not included.

The third mandatory part of the body to be washed or wiped is the head, “...and pass your [wet] hands lightly over your head.” This sentence means that it is not necessary to thoroughly wash the head, rather what is called for is to go over the top of the head with moist hands. The *head* here refers to poll and pate — the uppermost part of the human body that rests on the neck. Excluding the face, which has already been washed, the crown of the head (where the hair grows) has to be wiped — all or part of it. There is a provision for those who wear an *'amāmah* or *khimār* (headdress) to wipe over their *'amāmahs* in the same manner and rationale that is given for wiping over leather shoes (*khuffayn*). In discussing the pros and cons of whether or not to wipe directly over the hair/scalp, the *fiqhī* details are lengthy. Those desiring more information in this area should consult their particular *fiqh* reference books.

According to many scholars, it is permissible to wipe part of the head and not all of it.⁶⁷ Hairsplitting details about this and other innocuous matters exist in the books of *fiqh*, however, the tenor of this *tafsīr* is not meant to ponder the details of those opinions. This writer feels that all opinions are equally valid so long as they belong to a process of direct rational extraction from the words of the holy Text and the understanding of the Prophet's (ﷺ) practice, which may have been flexible enough to endorse multiple understandings and practices in this regard.

The final obligatory body part to be washed or wiped is the feet. Both washing and wiping the feet have their substantiation in

this *āyah*. The whole issue boils down to whether the word *arjulakum* (*your feet*) relates to the verb *fa-ighsilū* (...then, wash) or to the verb *wa-imsahū* (*and, wipe*), both verbs preceding the word *arjulakum*.

In the view of this writer, the human condition within environmental factors that are so supple and shifting necessitates an *āyah* with this kind of range, in which the God-proximate Muslims are given the choice to put their hearts at ease and do what they feel applies to them. Looking at the extremes of the human condition — for instance, the Eskimos as opposed to the Bedouins — a committed Muslim living, say, close to the North Pole, where temperatures are frigid, would prefer to wipe his feet, knowing that it is endorsed by this *āyah*. Washing his feet four or five times a day in such conditions could be hazardous to his overall health. Likewise, a committed Muslim living in the sun-baked desert, where temperatures soar almost to the boiling point, would most certainly want to run as much water as possible over his feet several times a day in preparation for his *ṣalāh*, knowing full well that his choice is endorsed by the same *āyah* here in this Text of wisdom. And in opting for either of the two positions, there is no conflict, no misunderstanding, and no polarization — as happens to be the case nowadays with some Muslims who have nothing more consequential to write long dissertations on.

Reiterating a position taken earlier when it comes to such matters, this particular *tafsīr* was not conceived with a desire to delve into these kinds of details. But in this peculiar instance many Muslims run into unnecessary confusion and misunderstandings, all of which are not warranted. The versatility of this divine Writ underwrites the human condition, and hence, understanding this Qur'an should never become a sort of "intellectual tribalism" in which some Muslims want to score against others. This is selfish and silly, not to mention slanderous and destructive.

The other details of *wuḍū'* — such as the arrangement or sequence of washing, the intention to wash, the invocation of the *basmalāh* before *wuḍū'*, supplications and invocations during the *wuḍū'*, beginning with right before left, washing more than once (three times), emphasizing hand-washing at the beginning, includ-

ing the washing of the neck, and brushing the teeth, etc. — are all either additive, isolated, or enhanced treatment of the particulars described in the *āyah*. Unfortunately, around these mostly inconsequential details, many of which happen to be technicalities, volumes of opinions have been written and multiple hours of discussions have taken place, all of which demonstrate how concerned our venerable scholars were about these issues, when their valuable time would have been far better served had they used it to explain some of the other *āyāt* that have elicited little more than a scant comment here or there!

After describing the minor cleansing necessary for *ṣalāh* (that is, *wuḍū'* after urination or defecation), the *āyah* moves the reader into the larger domain of hygiene and purity, “...and if you are in a state requiring total ablution, purify yourselves.” This means that if a person has experienced an ejaculation, the discharge of semen, coitus, or intercourse, then he or she is required to take a full bath before entering into *ṣalāh*. This is done by running pure water over the entire body. Another supportive *āyah* to this end occurred in the previous *sūrah*,

O you who are committed [to Allah]! Do not attempt to pray while you are in a state of drunkenness, [but wait] until you know what you are saying; nor yet [while you are] in a state requiring total ablution, until you have bathed — except if you are traveling [and are unable to do so]... (4:43).

The “sexual discharge” referred to as *janābah* is well-known. This sexual arousal producing seminal fluid is cause for a full and total bath. A more exacting consideration suggests that *janābah* can be defined as one of two things: ejaculation (the discharge of semen), or the convergence of the two sexual organs into each other, both of which necessitate the use of water to readjust and reinvigorate a person for communion with Allah (ﷻ). Notable in this context is the hadith, “Ejaculated water requires flowing water.”⁶⁸ Hence sexual intercourse requires a bath or shower, before a *ṣalāh*

can be performed. Another of the meanings of *janābah* is *avoidance* or *shunning*. While in this condition and until he or she takes a full shower, a person is to avoid *ṣalāh*, reading the Qur'an (according to many scholars), touching the *muṣḥaf* (the Qur'anic text), and entering a *masjid*.

Generally speaking, a committed Muslim should wash his *wuḍū'* body parts a few times a day, and his whole body at least once a week. Of course, the younger a person is, the more times he is apt to require a full bath, and the older he is, the lesser that requirement becomes.

The use of water to bathe or to perform the ablution is contingent upon two conditions: the presence of water, and using the water without any harm. If a Muslim is sick or traveling and cannot find water, he or she is permitted to use the surface of the earth (sand, soil, or dust) to substitute for water and do his *wuḍū'* or *ghusl*. The *āyah* says as much, **“But if you are ill, or are traveling, or have just satisfied a want of nature, or have cohabited with a woman, and can find no water, then take resort to pure dust...”**

This means that if a person is sick enough to be adverse and harmed by the use of water on the skin, then water should not be used. There may be some dermatologic conditions that are exacerbated by the use of water, and in such cases, there is a license for such individuals to use top soil or dust for purposes of *wuḍū'* and *ghusl*. License to do so is also granted to those who are on a journey or are traveling. In these conditions, when a person passes urine or excrement, he is obliged to use top soil (dry earth) in lieu of water for purposes of *wuḍū'*. Similarly, in these conditions when a person experiences sexual climax he or she may use dry earth in place of water to perform his or her *ghusl* (full bath). The Qur'anic term for substituting sand or soil for water is *tayammum*.

To tie things together, in the case of the four circumstances of illness, travel, the call of nature, and sexual climax, whenever water is needed to prepare for *ṣalāh* but is not available, then the Muslim may replace the use of water with the dry part of the earth's surface that is exposed to sunlight and wind. Obviously, in choosing such top soil there can be no *najāsah* (foul matter) in it or around

it. The *wuḍū'* in this topsoil alternative consists of patting the two hands onto the soil and then wiping both face and hands.⁶⁹

The words of Allah (ﷻ) go on to explain why *tayammum* has been authorized: to make the process of approaching Allah (ﷻ) easy and inviting. Allah (ﷻ) says that in matters pertaining to *wuḍū'*, *ghusl*, and *tayammum*, He does not want people to suffer or find it difficult when they want to meet Him. We should remember that He does not need us but at the same time He is facilitating things for us as we need Him. And we should keep in mind that all of this is recommended as a means to rid ourselves of filth, foul matter, and taint. Cleaning ourselves of dirt and grime is the minimum requirement to open up our hearts and minds to Him. In this sequence of instructions we purify our bodies along with the intent to purify our hearts and thoughts.

Some fine points about what may or may not invalidate the *wuḍū'* will be mentioned here — in passing — without going into the voluminous details in the books of fiqh:

1. passing or breaking wind necessitates *wuḍū'* if it is accompanied by a sound or smell;
2. external bleeding does not necessitate renewing the *wuḍū'*;
3. vomiting may or may not necessitate *wuḍū'* as there are contradictory *fiqhī* opinions about more than a mouthful of vomit;
4. sleeping may or may not necessitate renewing the *wuḍū'* — with the many opinions concerning sleep and *wuḍū'*, the bottom line is that sleeping itself does not necessitate *wuḍū'*; rather, during sleep, some people may pass wind, which makes sleeping indirectly an invalidator of *wuḍū'*;
5. touching a woman also comes with an assortment of incongruent opinions — it would seem that touching or physical contact with a woman invalidates *wuḍū'* if it results in the man's sexual arousal;
6. touching a sexual organ without a barrier such as cloth similarly is attended by clashing opinions — once again the determinant for invalidating *wuḍū'* may be “emotional sexual arousal”; and
7. eating camel meat — the overwhelming majority of scholarly

opinions says it does not invalidate *wuḍū'*, but there is a minority opinion to the contrary.⁷⁰ This opinion is akin to the one that necessitates *wuḍū'* after eating any cooked food. The reference is the Prophet's (ﷺ) hadith, "Do your *wuḍū'* after consuming food heated [or grilled] by fire."⁷¹ There are other hadiths that indicate the Prophet (ﷺ) did eat meat and went to *ṣalāh* without doing his *wuḍū'*, "The Prophet (ﷺ) ate from a lamb shoulder and then went to *ṣalāh* without performing *wuḍū'*."⁷²

Is the Water of the Industrial Age Suitable for Purification?

Allah does not want to impose any hardship upon you, but wants to make you pure, and to bestow upon you the full measure of His blessings, so that you might have cause to be grateful (5:6).

This *āyah* forces the Muslims to think about the word and concept of *ṭahārah* (virgin purity). All thinking Muslims should realize that Allah (ﷻ) wants to make their hearts pure, distill their minds, and remove the impurities from their bodies. This is a partial meaning of "...and [He wants] to bestow upon you the full measure of His blessings..."

Ṭahārah is not only the physical cleanliness of the body; beyond that, it is the virgin purity that results when there are no toxins on the nerves, no negativity in the person, no bad feelings in the heart, and no stain on the character. The *ṣalāh* with its "back-and-forth" communication with Allah (ﷻ) is meant to sublimate the soul, sanitize the spirit, and sanctify man's sentiments. This is a lifelong contract and commitment that has the effect of blunting rowdy behavior and expunging social vice. The cumulative outcome of a Muslim spending the days of his life in an ongoing procedure known as *ṣalāh* is his keen sense of Allah's (ﷻ) watchful presence. A Muslim throughout all these daily encounters with Allah (ﷻ) begins to love Him and to have hope in Him. *Wuḍū'* — a preparation for *ṣalāh* — energizes the Muslim and stim-

ulates him to open up to Allah (ﷻ) in his *ṣalāh*, “...so that you may have cause to be grateful.”

The word *ṭahārah* in some *āyāt* refers to a physical pureness, in other *āyāt* to a moral and psychological purity, and still in more *āyāt* to a combination of both. Examples of the first are given in the following two *āyāt*,

And your clothes, purify (74:4);

And [you men] do not draw near to them [your wives] until they are purified (2:222).

Thus in speaking about the monthly menstrual cycle of women, the Qur'an advises men to not have any physical, sexual contact with their wives until the latter have “cleared” their menstrual period. And when they are pure from their monthly discharge of menses, having taken a full bath after the blood has stopped flowing, then their husbands are free to engage in intimate contact with them as Allah (ﷻ) has recommended, “...and when they are cleansed, go into them as Allah has bidden you to do” (2:222). The *āyah* concludes with, “Indeed, Allah loves those who are amnestied and He loves those who purify themselves.” This would be inclusive of both physical and spiritual purity — those who cleanse their bodies of dirt and toxins and those who cleanse their souls of temptations and aggression. The second meaning of *ṭahārah* is exemplified by the next two *āyāt*,

...Those are the ones whom Allah seeks not to purify their hearts (5:41);

...Expel them [the intimates of Prophet Lot] from your social order, they are people who want to purify themselves (7:82).

This means that Prophet Lot's (ﷻ) confidants wanted to rid themselves of social vice. Likewise, the *āyah*,

And We took it upon Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl: Purify My house for those who walk around it, and those who will abide near it in attachment to it, and those who will bow down and prostrate themselves [in *ṣalāh*] (2:125),

means that the House of Allah (ﷺ) will have to be purged of all symbols and semblances that glorify man-made deities and false gods.

As the majority readers of this *tafsīr* in all likelihood will be Muslims let us take a look with our Islamic backgrounds and elementary information about *ṭahārah*, *wuḍū’*, *ghusl*, and *tayammum* at what the “scientific mind” has to say about some aspects of cleanliness, the skin, detoxification, and the like.

One of the body’s natural means of staying healthy is its ability to detoxify itself. Many of the harmful substances human beings absorb, inhale or create, are rendered harmless and expelled from their bodies. The organs of detoxification are the liver, kidneys, bowels, lungs, and skin. Avoiding harmful substances such as junk food, drugs, and smoke, as well as supporting the organs in their detoxifying action is vital to maintaining and restoring health. Sufficient fluid intake supports the eliminating function of the kidneys, the bowels, and the skin. The skin’s function as a detoxifying organ is often an afterthought, yet many therapies, including saunas, which promote sweating, try to revitalize this capacity. Fever is a natural means of toxin elimination during sickness; the heat triggers chemical reactions that enhance the immune system, and destroy bacteria and viruses. By routinely reducing fevers, the body’s self-healing mechanisms become compromised. Only when a fever becomes dangerously high should attempts at lowering it be employed.⁷³

Skin, hair, and nails are valued highly as traits of beauty, however, they are remarkably important for the healthy maintenance of the body. While it may be the most physically appealing body system, the integumentary system (which includes skin, hair, nails, glands and nerve endings), receives the most exposure to infection, disease, and injury because it is the protective barrier against sun, wind, cold, heat, bacteria and physical trauma.⁷⁴

Proper elimination of toxins (*khabā'ith*) happens through the liver and bowels. However, if these organs cannot carry out their functions properly, or are overburdened from a poor diet of rich, oily foods and sweets, the skin becomes an additional means of elimination. With this added work, skin problems like acne are more likely to occur.⁷⁵

The skin keeps the body from dehydrating and keeps its temperature constant. It also houses sensors for touch and pain, and is capable of absorbing substances, including hormones like estrogen and poisons like lead. The skin is a multi-layered system in a continual process of renewal that completes its cycle about every 27 days. Since this renewal process is most active at night during sleep, sufficient rest is important.⁷⁶

The skin consists of several layers. The outer layer is the epidermis; the inner layer is the dermis, a tough yet elastic tissue; and the third layer, which is composed chiefly of fat cells, is called the subcutis. The epidermis repairs and renews skin tissue. The outermost cells are constantly worn away and replaced by new cells growing from below. The dermis contains the blood vessels, hair follicles, sweat glands, and nerves. It is here where temperature, fluids, and circulation are regulated. The fat layer serves as protection for the organs, bones, and muscles; as a storehouse of energy; and as an insulator from the cold.⁷⁷

The primary function of hair is protection. Hair on the head protects the scalp from sunburn and injury, and prevents heat loss. Eyebrows and eyelashes guard the eyes from foreign particles, and nasal and aural hairs perform the same function for nasal cavities and the ears. Nails are tightly-packed, hardened cells of the epidermis that form a solid cover to protect the ends of the fingers and toes from injury. Although nails are clear, most of the nail body looks pink because of the blood flowing beneath it. Nails allow for the grasping and maneuvering of small objects.⁷⁸

The glands associated with the skin are the oil, sweat, ceruminous (a type of sweat gland in the ear), and mammary glands. The excretions from these glands help to eliminate waste and toxins from the body, lubricate the skin and hair to keep them soft, and

prevent foreign particles from entering the body. The mammary glands release milk from a woman's breast for nursing an infant.⁷⁹

The blood vessels, lymphatic vessels, vasculature of the hair follicles, enzyme systems, the detoxification capability of the sweat glands, and other factors make the skin important in the detoxification process. Healthy circulatory and lymphatic systems support detoxification. When these become sluggish, many waste products are left behind in body tissues. Regular exercise and alternating hot and cold baths invigorate both the circulatory and lymphatic systems. When functioning properly, the skin protects other organs, such as the heart, liver, kidneys, and gastrointestinal tract, from overwork. When other detoxification organs are not functioning properly, the skin tries to compensate by releasing toxins through sweat, rashes, or abscesses. In people who have chronic kidney disease, the sweat glands can become damaged from overuse, excreting toxic wastes that would normally be excreted by the kidneys.⁸⁰

It has been said that the skin is a mirror of what is happening in the body. It is the largest organ of detoxification, as well as the largest organ of absorption. It will absorb both nutrients and toxins, including perfume and skin care products. Stress, hormone imbalances, poor diet, and nutritional deficiencies all affect the skin's health. Fortunately, old, dying skin cells are sloughed off daily, and the skin is able to renew itself.⁸¹

Dry brushing the skin is a European method of improving skin function. Besides serving to cleanse the skin of its layer of dead cells, and helping to remove mucus residues and uric acid crystals, it also promotes circulation and stimulates detoxification. Use of a natural bristle or a soft surgical scrub brush may do it. It is recommended that after dry brushing is done over all the body's skin, it should be followed with a cleansing shower or bath. Massage therapy will help improve skin tone by increasing circulation. Essential oils help to detoxify, nourish, tone, soothe, and support skin function.⁸²

In reference to *al-ṣa'id al-ṭayyib* (hygienic topsoil) there is mention in some medical sources about "charcoal powder," which can be placed directly on the skin to reduce swelling by absorbing excess fluid and the products of inflammation. It will also adsorb

toxins, bacteria, carcinogens, products of allergies, and wound secretions. Charcoal powder will remove odors from skin ulcers if it is placed directly on the ulcer or in a dressing over the ulcer. It will also remove odors from casts.⁸³

The overall Islamic sense of hygiene is naturally inclusive of inner and outer cleanliness, the latter of which is often associated with washing and bathing. In an effort to try and grasp the range and inclusivity of Islamic principles, it would be instructive to take a brief look at some of the accumulated human knowledge, experience, and history of baths and bathing, all with a view to seeing how this can help us better approach our Creator with clear minds and clean hearts.

Numerous types of baths have been used by all cultures and civilizations to wash away illness and to purify and cleanse the body. Sickness was considered an unclean state, and purification of both the sick person and the home was a necessity. The original baths were taken in rivers, seas, lakes, and pools. Springs were considered to be divine by some, with special powers for healing, and enhancing fertility.

The temperature of the medicinal bath varied with its medical purpose and the disease involved. For centuries, cold baths and cooling compresses have been used to treat fevers and help reduce pain. Tepid or warm baths were used to calm hysterical and agitated, mentally ill patients, because warm water has a sedative effect that tends to induce both relaxation and sleep.⁸⁴

The most popular was the hot bath, dating back (in some books) as far as ancient Egypt. A hot bath is clinically analgesic, but is also stimulating to the nervous system. The Greeks and Romans frequented bathhouses in which both hot and cold baths were available. In medieval Europe, there were no baths in private homes and the general public went to bathhouses, not just for cleanliness, but for their health. Bleeding, cupping, and massage were available at bathhouses, along with various tonics and herbal remedies. The hot bath caused sweating, which was considered therapeutic as well as cleansing. According to ancient tradition, there were three kinds of sweat: the sweat of illness, of toil, and of

bathing. Steam baths and wet saunas are used today to help respiratory diseases and relieve rheumatic pain. They are also helpful for skin tone and texture.⁸⁵

Hydrotherapy is the use of water, steam, or ice, and hot and cold temperatures to maintain or restore health. Although the therapeutic use of water dates back to at least the beginning of civilization, some Europeans claim they began hydrotherapy as a “science” in the early-1800s. They used sprays (strong jets of water directed at a given area), cold purges, sweat baths, wet compresses, and other treatments that are still given today. Many hydrotherapy techniques help with detoxification. Hydrotherapy makes use of the body’s response to heat and cold, utilizing hot water, cold water, or contrast therapy that alternates between the two. The duration and temperature of hydrotherapy application must be adjusted to the individual.⁸⁶

The primary reaction of the body to heat is relaxation, and its secondary reaction is depression, sedation, and atony (lack of muscle tone). The secondary heat effect causes a rapid pulse, decreased perspiration, mental tiredness, drowsiness, and muscular weakness. Heat stimulates the immune system and causes the white blood cells to migrate from the blood vessels into the tissues, cleaning up toxins, including bacteria and viruses, and eliminating waste. It soothes and relaxes the body, and through reflex action affects every organ and system of the body.⁸⁷

Conversely, the primary reaction of the body to cold is stimulation, and its secondary reaction is invigorating, restorative, and tonic (improves muscle tone). This secondary cold effect causes smooth, soft skin, a sensation of warmth, slowed pulse, easy respiration, warmth of skin, and perspiration. Cold reduces inflammation by vasoconstriction, also reducing inflammatory agents by making the blood vessels less permeable. It tones muscle weakness, and long cold treatments will reduce fever.⁸⁸

Contrast therapy (the alternating of heat and cold) stimulates the adrenal and endocrine system. It reduces congestion, alleviates inflammation, and activates organ function. Contrast therapy is particularly good for improving circulation in the digestive organs

and pelvis, and for the detoxification capacity of the liver. Hot footbaths with ice on the back of the neck can help to relieve a tension headache.⁸⁹

Hydrotherapy increases the circulation of the blood and lymph, cleans the skin, and removes impurities. It can be used to relieve pain, lower fever, decrease cramps, induce sleep, soothe the nervous system, act as a stimulant, increase physical and mental tone, and serve as a local anesthetic. It also increases urine production and spurs bowel evacuation, both of which aid in detoxification. Hydrotherapy methods, which can include steam baths, saunas, full-body immersion baths, neutral baths, compresses, packs, wet sheet packs, sprays, showers, and colonic irrigation, should be selected with care, and when possible with the help of a healthcare practitioner, particularly for people with severe problems.⁹⁰ Naturopaths are quite skilled in the use of hydrotherapy.

Baths, including sitz, full-immersion, local, and sweating baths have been part of therapeutic regimens. Except for the sweating bath, these baths may be hot, cold, or alternating hot and cold. The sweating bath and hot shower facilitate detoxification. Sweat baths, vapor baths, and steam inhalations clear mucous membrane congestion. Cold baths and showers can reduce inflammation, tone muscles, and reduce fatigue. Alternating hot and cold showers, which should always begin with hot water and end with cold, increase circulation and stimulate organ function.⁹¹

Sometimes neutral baths are used. These are full-immersion baths, with the water temperature ranging from 92–98°F. They are soothing to the nervous system and are effective for treating mental and emotional disturbances, as well as insomnia. According to some doctors, two hours in a neutral bath reduces excessive fluid retention. They also help promote detoxification from drugs and alcohol consumption by helping the body rid itself of toxin-laden fluids.⁹²

In the days of the historical *faqīhs* most of the water supply in the world was still unpolluted and uncontaminated. Thus, these *faqīhs*' spoke about *al-mā' al-muṭlaq* (undiminished and unmitigated water). Today though, as was the case with the contamination of the meat supply, there is contamination, and in some cases, adul-

teration of the water supply. Hence a closer look at the water we use to execute our *wuḍū'* is appropriate at this point.

Humans drink water, cook with it, bathe in it, and inhale it in aerosols or as vapors. Clean drinking water is an absolute necessity for good health and body cleansing. Adequate water intake is necessary to slush toxins and waste materials from cells. Increased water intake helps to detoxify from anesthetic agents and medications. Adequate fluid levels are necessary for ions in the body to flow and maintain electrical equilibrium. Nutrients must be kept in solution so as to be available for cell nourishment and repair.

When it is contaminated, water becomes a toxin. Water can be contaminated with chemicals or microorganisms at the source, in the local water system, and in the home. It is worth mentioning that only pure water can be used in our purifying *wuḍū'*. The following list identifies some of the more common contaminants that render water impure:

1. coliform bacteria – from human and animal wastes, these indicate the potential presence of water-associated disease-causing microorganisms;
2. barium – high levels constitute a contaminant that can enter the water through industrial waste discharges. Barium is said not to be harmful in small doses, but large doses can raise blood pressure and cause nerve damage, thus *wuḍū'* is invalid if done with water of a high barium content;
3. cadmium – can enter water from insecticides and the waste discharges from metallurgical industries, though the most common source is galvanized pipes and plumbing fixtures. Kidney and lung diseases are caused by heavy exposure to cadmium, the principal health hazard coming from occupational exposure;
4. chromium – found in cigarettes, some foods, and the air. Some studies suggest that minute amounts may be essential for glucose metabolism, but high doses can be toxic;
5. fluoride – in the proper amounts, it is said to prevent tooth decay. Excessive amounts, occasionally found naturally in some water sources, may cause brown spots or mottling (blotch) on teeth;⁹³

6. lead – another contaminant found in running water, from lead pipes, it causes damage to the kidneys and the nervous system;
7. mercury – from industrial and agricultural use, it can cause acute poisoning at high levels, and chronic poisoning at lower levels. It is rarely found in drinking water, but more commonly in fish that come from waters that are high in mercury;
8. selenium – may be toxic at high levels, and studies are currently underway to determine the exact levels that may be toxic. However, there is considerable evidence that low levels of selenium may protect against cancer;
9. silver – present in water and high amounts pose a problem;
10. pesticides – seep into groundwater from use on croplands, forests, lawns, and gardens. Many may cause no problem but the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has set standards for endrin, lindane, methoxychlor, toxephene, 2,4-D and 2,4,5-TP Silvex; and
11. radioactivity – the only contaminant for which standards have been set that is known to cause cancer in humans. There are no risks of radioactivity in community water supplies generally speaking, except in unusual circumstances and accidents.

Turbidity, another word for muddiness or cloudiness, is the general term applied by the *faqīhs* to designate unsuitable water. If the water looks dirty, the rule of thumb is to not drink it or use it for ritual purification purposes. In such a state, the water is considered to be full of some sort of unidentified contaminant, and even if the cloudiness is due only to harmless dirt, the *faqīhs* believe that it may interfere with proper bacteria testing of the water, hence possibly concealing the presence of some harmful contaminant.

Suffice it to say there are many contaminants in the water supply of our ever-industrializing world. Muslims who are honoring their relationship with Allah (ﷻ) should be aware of the fact that the water for *wuḍū'* runs the risk of becoming something less than the pure and fresh water that is required.

In most areas of the “developed world,” water is analyzed for dissolved oxygen, fecal coliform bacteria (bacteria from the intes-

tines), suspended sediment, dissolved solids, phosphorus, and for only 60 of 700 chemicals regularly found in drinking water. Water is not monitored for radioactive materials. The level of exposure a person has to these contaminants depends on the fluid intake, absorption rate, and concentrations of chemicals in the water consumed.

Raw untreated water, from groundwater or surface sources, can be contaminated with naturally occurring substances in rocks, such as asbestos, radioactive elements, and metals. Many water sources are also contaminated by various organisms, and toxins produced by human activity.

The area surrounding rivers dramatically affects the quality of the running water. Although rivers contain large volumes of moving water, they can be contaminated by landfill runoff, sewage, and agricultural and industrial wastes. Rivers contain biological contaminants from sewage wastes, as well as natural organic pollutants from the land through which they flow. Lakes are usually fed by streams or other water sources that run into them. They will also contain pollution from the polluted areas surrounding them, including runoff originating from agricultural wastes, city street pollution, dumps, landfills, and manufacturing and municipal wastes. Lake water may also have a high algae content, as well as contamination by exhausts and bilge from boat motors. Springs can be contaminated by sewage or underground gas and oil wells.⁹⁴

Groundwater, fed by precipitation, is stored naturally in water-bearing rocks called aquifers. The aquifers in which groundwater is stored can be contaminated by underground gasoline tanks, leaking septic systems, poorly located landfills, mine tailings, agricultural runoff, oil field operations, and industrial waste storage tanks. Aquifers near the coast can be contaminated with seawater. It is difficult to trace contamination in an aquifer, and once contamination has occurred it cannot be reversed. Groundwater moves very slowly, and there is no way to dilute the water to decrease the contamination.⁹⁵

A variety of organisms are found in rivers, lakes, and groundwater. Much of the natural water in North America, for example,

is now contaminated with *Giardia lamblia*, from animal feces. *Giardia* is a microscopic parasite that causes bloating, abdominal cramps, diarrhea, and sometimes vomiting. If not treated, a *Giardia* infection can persist for years.⁹⁶

Cryptosporidium is a parasite found in water contaminated with sewage and animal wastes. It makes its way into lakes and rivers and is highly resistant to disinfection even by water treatment systems. *Cryptosporidium* causes gastrointestinal illness, with diarrhea, nausea, and stomach cramps. Immunocompromised people will have more severe and persistent symptoms.⁹⁷

In May of 2000, *Escherichia coli* in the drinking water of Walkerton, Ontario, Canada caused the worst waterborne outbreak of illness from this organism in North America. At least seven deaths occurred and hundreds of people became ill from ingesting the intestinal bacteria in the water. What were initially thought to be unrelated deaths also came under investigation to see if they were connected to the outbreak. It is speculated that heavy rains contaminated the town's well with farm manure and a faulty chlorination system failed to kill the dangerous variety of *E. coli*. More than one-fifth of the residents there reported nausea, vomiting, and diarrhea. This type of *Escherichia coli* (O157:H7) causes hemorrhagic colitis characterized by the sudden onset of abdominal pain and severe cramps, followed within 24 hours by watery diarrhea that becomes bloody. Most people recover from this infection, but a few individuals develop hemolytic uremia syndrome (HUS), which can lead to kidney failure. There is no known therapy that will stop the progression of HUS. Even with the best and most prompt medical care, HUS has a mortality rate of about 5%. Survivors of HUS usually develop serious kidney, neurological, or pancreatic problems that can significantly impair their quality of life.⁹⁸

Other organisms found in water include the bacteria that cause cholera, typhoid, and dysentery; the virus that causes hepatitis; as well as amoebae, algae, and fungi. These organisms enter the water supply through human waste coming from cesspool seepage and runoff containing infected animal urine and feces. Viruses in human waste settle into marine sediments that can become reser-

voirs. Shellfish, including oysters and clams, bioaccumulate viruses from these reservoirs.

Tap water is regulated in the United States by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and is regarded as a utility. Tap water quality depends on the quality of the raw untreated water, the type and number of additives used in the water treatment plant, and contaminants added in transit to the tap.

Groundwater taken from wells is the water source for about half the people in North America. The use of groundwater has increased in the past 35 years, and approximately 75% of American cities use groundwater for some or all of their water. In some parts of the country, groundwater is used with little or no treatment. Well water is no longer as safe as it once was because of contamination of deep water tables. In areas of oil shale and coal, well water will contain phenols. It may also contain so many dissolved minerals that it is unfit for drinking.⁹⁹

When water is not used directly from wells, it is moved from groundwater and surface sources to storage areas for treatment. Some of the chemical substances used to treat water can be toxic in and of themselves:

1. copper sulfate – a poison in larger amounts, it may be added to control the growth of algae;
2. aluminum – in the form of alum, it is always added to water to precipitate and remove organic material. Most of the alum comes out with the organic material, but even a minute amount of aluminum is very toxic for people with kidney disease;
3. chlorine – since 1908, it has been added to North American water systems as a disinfectant, after it was discovered that it reduced the incidence of infectious diseases in Chicago stockyard cattle. Although chlorination does not kill viruses or protozoa (such as *Giardia lamblia* and *Cryptosporidium*), it is the major method used today to disinfect water in North America. Chlorine-treated water is delivered to 75% of North American homes.

Chlorine itself presents a health risk. It can also react with naturally occurring organic materials in the water, such as

decaying leaves, to form trihalomethane (THM) compounds, the most common of which is chloroform. Some trihalomethanes are suspected carcinogens. People who have used chlorinated water all their lives have a higher incidence of bladder and rectal cancer than those who have used unchlorinated water. A California study found that miscarriage rates were higher among women who drank water containing moderate amounts of trihalomethanes. Chlorine has also been implicated in coronary heart disease and atherosclerosis;

4. ozone, chlorine dioxide, chloramine – may be used instead of chlorine to disinfect the water. Chlorine dioxide and chloramine are significant pollutants. Chlorine dioxide will remove flavor from water as well as disinfecting it. In excess quantities, it can be highly irritating and corrosive to the skin and mucous membranes of the respiratory tract. Like chlorine, it reacts with organic materials to form trihalomethanes. Chloramine can cause contact dermatitis.¹⁰⁰

Additional disinfectants may be added to the water to kill microorganisms. Some municipalities also use elaborate filtration systems to remove microorganisms. In spite of all the purification measures used, the Centers for Disease Control in Atlanta, Georgia, USA estimate that every year over a million people in the United States get sick from microorganisms in drinking water, and 900–1,000 die as a result. Ozonization, the major method of water purification in Europe, is very effective and adds fewer pollutants to the water than other methods.¹⁰¹

Corroded pipes between the treatment plant and the consumer can allow lead, copper, asbestos, cadmium, iron, zinc, and nickel to enter the water supply. Lead is one of the most serious toxins found in water. Water in the home can be contaminated with lead from pipes or from lead solder used to join copper pipes. Corrosion of pipes, fittings, and solder adds more lead to the water. Water with an acidic pH leaches more lead from the pipes. Flushing out the tap in the morning for three to five minutes before using the water, and using only cold water for drinking and cooking

ensures a lower lead content. Infants and children are more susceptible to the effects of lead. It can affect the formation of blood, the gastrointestinal tract, kidneys, and central nervous system.¹⁰²

Copper is widely used in household plumbing materials, and most copper contamination of water occurs from corrosion of these copper pipes by acidic water. It rarely occurs from contamination of the source water. The EPA has set the Maximum Contaminant Level Goal for copper at 1.3 parts per million. Above this level, even for a short time, copper can cause stomach and intestinal distress, liver and kidney damage, and anemia. People with Wilson's Disease are particularly sensitive to copper contamination.¹⁰³

Asbestos is no longer used in pipes; however, asbestos fibers released from decaying cement pipes is a potential water contaminant. In areas where the water is acidic, the problem is greater. Great controversy has existed over plastic pipes and their safety. A variety of toxic volatile chemicals leach into the water from vinyl chloride and polybutylene pipes. In addition, chemicals including pesticides, solvents, and gasoline, can penetrate plastic pipes, as well as iron pipes and most permeable asbestos cement pipes.

The levels of such metals and chemicals as arsenic, cadmium, chromium, fluoride, lead, mercury, nitrate, radium, radon, selenium, trihalomethanes, and uranium are all regulated under the "US Safe Drinking Water Act."¹⁰⁴ However, the enforcement of current regulations for water is weak. EPA regulators do not fine all violators of the Safe Drinking Water Act, even though they are required to do so by federal law. Many drinking water suppliers do not notify customers when their water is contaminated. The EPA is understaffed and under-budgeted to perform enforcement activities. In addition, many states do not fulfill their obligations to ensure water safety.

Finally, as the secularizing world moves humanity more and more in a direction in which moral responsibility is separated from human activity, the escalating contamination of the world's water supply due to avoidable human carelessness — mostly because of the nature of the greed and arrogance that scorn regulations and oversight designed to protect the environment, and human and marine life from catastrophic damage — should come as no sur-

prise. The British Petroleum (BP) oil spill in the Gulf of Mexico (2010) and the Fukushima nuclear plant disaster (2011) are important cases in point.

Otherwise known as the Deepwater Horizon oil spill, the Gulf of Mexico disaster is now considered to be the largest “accidental” marine oil spill in the history of the petroleum industry, some 210 million gallons of oil according to US government official estimates, which are disputed as being too low by environmental organizations. Due to the explosion and sinking of the Deepwater Horizon oil rig, owned by British Petroleum, approximately 68,000 miles of ocean were immediately impacted (according to satellite imagery and data), not to mention damage to surrounding coastlines in the US and Mexico. Though the leak was finally capped after 87 days and then officially declared to be sealed months later, reports suggest that the oil site continues to leak. In 2014, a US judge declared that BP, because of its gross negligence and reckless misconduct, was chiefly responsible for the oil spill, despite the fact that other contractors, among them Haliburton (a major US defense contractor), were involved in the operation of the rig, and the coverup that ensued after the spill went public.

The ruination of the regional environment as well as the global impact of the spill and subsequent cleanup efforts was unprecedented. Not only were the components of the oil itself, such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAHs), considered to be carcinogenic to human and marine life, but the synthetic chemicals employed to disperse the oil slick above and below the surface of the water, such as Corexit, are toxic in and of themselves, and more toxic than the oil they are designed to clean up. Such large quantities of these chemicals were dumped into the Gulf of Mexico that residues of the oil-dispersant mixture showed up in the body chemistries of the entire chain of life ranging from simple organisms like plankton to complex mammals like dolphins. On shore, traces of these chemicals were found in migratory birds as far north as Canada, and in pelican eggs. Disturbing numbers of fish and shellfish with serious mutations were found, including one out of two shrimp having no eyes or eye-sockets. With regard to the

human population living in the vicinity of the spill, parents of children reported unexplained symptoms such as bleeding ears, bleeding noses, and early menstruation in young girls. Other findings detailed that a significant number of Gulf of Mexico residents were suffering from anxiety, depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD), neurological conditions, and liver and kidney damage. Geologists and ocean scientists and specialists also indicate that the ocean floor in the area of the spill was also damaged.¹⁰⁵

Though the US government itself was never charged as being complicit in the spill, it was as guilty of negligence and greed as the criminal contractors and oil companies themselves. The business of fossil fuels is a partnership between big government and big oil (prospecting corporations) that excludes the interests of the people who pay for and consume these fossil fuels. Some say that the partnership is really a sole proprietorship: big oil government. Multiple agencies of the US government issued permits and contracts for the deepwater oil drilling to take place while failing to provide the regulatory oversight that is supposed to offset such disasters, despite being aware of the hazards associated with the process of deepwater drilling. These include the complex machinery and technology to drill at depths of greater than 10,000 ft below the sea floor, much of which is still experimental; the harsh offshore environments that pose engineering challenges to the functionality of offshore drilling equipment; and the inexperience of oil companies in operating at such depths. BP has grudgingly acknowledged that its efforts to seal the oil leak failed because the company had no prior experience in capping a leak at that depth and was therefore unprepared for the conditions that foiled its attempts to do so. To date, not one US government employee has been fired for his incompetence in contributing materially to a disaster that affected tens of millions, and perhaps billions, of people.¹⁰⁶

As if to add insult to injury, one year later the secular, material robber-barons of the world gave us Fukushima. Triggered by the Tohoku earthquake and resultant tsunami off the coast of Japan, the Fukushima Daiichi nuclear disaster was the result of a nuclear meltdown (the accidental melting or collapse of the core of a

nuclear reactor accompanied by a leak of lethal amounts of radiation) of three of the Fukushima plant's six nuclear reactors. Besides the Chernobyl meltdown in 1986 (in the former USSR), Fukushima is the only other level 7 nuclear incident on record (as determined by the International Nuclear Event Scale). The Tokyo Electric Power Company (TEPCO), the utility in charge of the Daiichi Fukushima Nuclear Power Plant, has admitted that the affected reactors were releasing a whopping 150 billion becquerels of tritium- and 7 billion becquerels of cesium- and strontium-contaminated water, every day, into the ocean. The Japanese government's regulatory limit does not allow over 100 becquerels/kg in food to be sold as produce. At the time of the incident, no human worker could enter the areas around the catastrophic reactor buildings because of the melted nuclear fuel scattered at various locations beneath the reactors, with radiation levels measuring at up to 10 sieverts/hr. By comparison a lifetime dose under "normal" circumstances does not exceed 100 millisieverts and normal background radiation is in the range of 0.05–0.15 microsieverts/hr.¹⁰⁷

Estimates vary about the amount of radiation released compared to the Chernobyl incident, whether significantly more or substantially less, depending on the agency or organization conducting the study. Similarly, articles and counter-articles have been written on the extent of environmental damage, specifically to the Pacific Ocean, many coming from highly agendized positions that either substantiate the notion of the Pacific Ocean dying as a result or deconstruct that same hypothesis. It may take decades to know how much damage was done to the Pacific in particular, and to the world's waterways in general. However, no one disagrees about the fact that this disaster was preventable, had the appropriate regulatory agencies been doing the task they were assigned.

Explicitly, what this means is that the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) failed to avert a global disaster because it, along with the P5+1 countries (permanent members of the United Nations Security Council plus Germany), was busy messing around trying to find nukes where there were not any — in the Islamic Republic of Iran — while conveniently turning a blind eye to hun-

dreds of other more robust nuclear installations all around the world, even failing and non-compliant ones like at Fukushima. The thousands of man-hours and perhaps tens of millions of dollars that the agency has spent in applying the microscope to Iran could have been directed at saving the Japanese people from another nuclear tragedy. With the amount of plutonium Japan has enriched for other countries, it is said that the country has the technology, the know-how, and the wherewithal to “go nuclear in a weekend,” meaning to weaponized status. Yet, this same country, which was a member of the Axis powers in WWII and which (according to a US reading of history) launched an unprovoked attack against the United States, received, by comparison to Islamic Iran, absolutely no attention from the world’s nuclear watchdog.

Given that the Fukushima Nuclear Accident Independent Investigation Commission found the nuclear disaster to be man-made, that its direct causes were all foreseeable, that the plant was incapable of withstanding an earthquake or tsunami, and that all responsible parties including TEPCO failed to meet the most basic safety requirements — such as assessing the probability of damage, preparing for containing collateral damage from such a disaster, and developing evacuation plans — it gives credence to the allegations that the IAEA is a political hammer to beat down any aspirants to nuclear technology who happen to be at odds with the corrupt world order managed by the United States, the EU, Israel, and Saudi Arabia. Just as the US government was complicit in the BP oil spill, the IAEA is an unindicted co-author of the Fukushima nuclear tragedy. And not unlike its key benefactor, not one person in the agency was relieved of his duties for allowing a calamity of this magnitude to occur under his watch.

Beyond what some defenders of the prevailing materialistic world “order” may charitably write off as regulatory oversights that come with managing the complexity of water distribution in a post-industrial society, there is the intentional degradation of water supplies and systems or the deliberate restrictions placed on access to clean water in order to wipe out entire populations, mostly the occupied and the poor. Consider what has happened during the US

occupation of Iraq and its invasion of Libya, and the continuing Zionist occupation of Palestine. About the over two-decade-long US occupation of Iraq, Nafeez Mosaddeq Ahmed, Executive Director of the Institute for Policy Research & Development, writes,

The war on Iraq did not begin in 2003, but in 1991 with the first Gulf War, which was followed by the UN sanctions regime.

An early PSR [Physicians for Social Responsibility] study by Beth Daponte, then a US government Census Bureau demographer, found that Iraq deaths caused by the direct and indirect impact of the first Gulf War amounted to around 200,000 Iraqis, mostly civilians. Meanwhile, her internal government study was suppressed.

After US-led forces pulled out, the war on Iraq continued in economic form through the US-UK imposed UN sanctions regime, on the pretext of denying Saddam Hussein the materials necessary to make weapons of mass destruction. Items banned from Iraq under this rationale included a vast number of items needed for everyday life.

Undisputed UN figures show that 1.7 million Iraqi civilians died due to the West's brutal sanctions regime, half of whom were children.

The mass death was seemingly intended. Among items banned by the UN sanctions were chemicals and equipment essential for Iraq's national water treatment system. A secret US Defence Intelligence Agency (DIA) document discovered by Professor Thomas Nagy of the School of Business at George Washington University amounted, he said, to "an early blueprint for genocide against the people of Iraq."

In his paper for the Association of Genocide Scholars at the University of Manitoba, Professor Nagy explained that the DIA document revealed "minute details of a fully workable method to 'fully degrade the

water treatment system' of an entire nation" over a period of a decade. The sanctions policy would create "the conditions for widespread disease, including full scale epidemics," thus "liquidating a significant portion of the population of Iraq."

This means that in Iraq alone, the US-led war from 1991 to 2003 killed 1.9 million Iraqis; then from 2003 onwards around 1 million: totalling just under 3 million Iraqis dead over two decades.¹⁰⁸

The United States' Barack Obama occupied Libya (2011) in the same way that Nazi Germany's Adolf Hitler occupied Poland (1939), though few would have the courage of conscience to put the two in the same category. A war of aggression (occupation) is defined by the United Nations as a war crime; similarly, destroying essential civilian infrastructure in the prosecution of a war of aggression is also a war crime. Nearly all of what is left of the nation-state called Libya is desert and 70% of Libyans, especially those who live in the north where most of the population centers are, depend on water that is transported by the Great Man-Made River (GMMR) system from the Nubian Sandstone Aquifer under the southern desert. Given that the majority of the country is water-starved, the GMMR pipe and aquifer system is the most essential civilian infrastructure in Libya, so much so because it is a matter of life and death. The GMMR cannot function without the Brega pipe factory, which enables leaks and breaks in the system to be repaired, a facility that was bombed by NATO under the spurious claim that it was used as a military storage facility from where rockets were being launched. In an article written for the Centre for Research on Globalization, the bigger picture is brought into focus,

It was Muammar Gaddafi's dream to provide fresh water for all Libyans and to make Libya self-sufficient in food production.

Libyans called it the eighth wonder of the world. Western media called it a pet project and the pipe dream

of a mad dog. The “mad dog” himself in 1991 prophetically said about the largest civil engineering venture in the world, “After this achievement, American threats against Libya will double. The United States will make excuses, but the real reason is to stop this achievement, to keep the people of Libya oppressed.”

...At the time of the NATO-led war against Libya in 2011, three phases of the Great Man-Made River Project were completed. The first and largest phase, providing two million cubic metres of water a day along a 1,200 km pipeline to Benghazi and Sirte, was formally inaugurated in August 1991.

...In July 2011, NATO not only bombed the Great Man-Made River water supply pipeline near Brega, but also destroyed the factory that produces the pipes to repair it... Six of the facility’s security guards were killed in the NATO attack, and the water supply for 70% of the population who depend on the piped supply for personal use and for irrigation has been compromised with this damage to Libya’s vital infrastructure.

The construction on the last two phases of the Great Man-Made River Project was scheduled to continue over the next two decades, but NATO’s war on Libya has thrown the project’s future — and the well-being of the Libyan people — into great jeopardy.

...Fresh clean water, as provided to the Libyans by the Great Man-Made River, is essential to all life forms. Without fresh water we simply cannot function. Right now, 40% of the global population has little to no access to clean water, and that figure is actually expected to jump to 50% by 2025. According to the United Nations Development Program 2007, global consumption of water is doubling every 20 years, more than twice the rate of human population growth. Simultaneously, every single year most of the major deserts around the world are becoming bigger and the amount of usable agricultur-

al land in most areas is becoming smaller, while rivers, lakes, and major underground aquifers around the globe are drying up — except in Gaddafi's Libya.

In the light of the current world developments, there is more to the NATO destruction of the Great Man-Made River Project than being an isolated war crime. The United Nations Environment Program 2007 describes a so-called “water for profit scheme,” which actively promotes the privatization and monopolization of the world's water supplies by multinational corporations. Meanwhile the World Bank recently adopted a policy of water privatization and full-cost water pricing, with one of its former directors, Ismail Serageldin, stating, “The wars of the 21st century will be fought over water.”

In practice this means that the United Nations in collaboration with the World Bank plans to secure water resources to use at their disposal, and that once they totally control these resources, the resources become assets to be reallocated back to the enslaved nations for a price. Those prices will rise while the quality of the water will decrease, and fresh water sources will become less accessible to those who desperately need it. Simply put, one of the most effective ways to enslave the people is to take control of their basic daily needs and to take away their self-sufficiency.

...A “democratic” and “democracy-bringing” government that came to power through the wounding and killing of thousands of Libyans by “humanitarian bombs” overthrew the “dictator” whose dream it was to provide fresh water for all Libyans for free.¹⁰⁹

And then finally, there are the inconvenient truths that attend the couldn't-care-less kind of ideological conditioning responsible for stiffening its upper lip at the slow, but inexorable, genocide of a people who are considered interlopers on their own (holy) land. In this scenario, orchestrated by Israeli invaders and underwritten by

American bombs and Saudi treachery, curtailing access to clean water is another lethal weapon in the arsenal to systematically cull the numbers of Palestinians without having to call it a holocaust. Contrasting the use of water by Israelis as opposed to Palestinians in the occupied territories (West Bank and Gaza), here are some excerpts from a fact sheet published by the *Palestine Monitor*,

- Of the water available from West Bank aquifers, Israel uses 73%, West Bank Palestinians use 17%, and illegal Zionist squatters use 10%.
- While 10–14% of Palestine's GDP is agricultural, 90% of the Palestinians must rely on rain-fed farming methods. Israel's agriculture is only 3% of its GDP, but Israel irrigates more than 50% of its land.
- Three million West Bank Palestinians use only 250 million m³/year (83m³/Palestinian/year) while six million Israelis enjoy the use of 1,954 million m³/year (333m³/Israeli/year), which means that each Israeli consumes as much water as four Palestinians. Israeli squatters are allocated 1,450m³/person/year.
- Israel consumes the vast majority of the water from the Jordan River despite only 3% of the river falling within its pre-1967 borders. Israel now diverts one-quarter of its total water consumption through its National Water Carrier from the Jordan River, whereas Palestinians have no access to it whatsoever due to Israeli closures.
- Under international law it is illegal for Israel to expropriate the water of the Occupied Palestinian Territories for use by its own citizens, and doubly illegal to expropriate it for use by illegal Zionist squatters.
- Israel does not allow new wells to be drilled by Palestinians and has confiscated many wells for Israeli use. Israel sets quotas on how much water can be drawn by Palestinians from existing wells. Israeli squatters have no restrictions on water use.
- When supplies of water are low in the summer months, the Israeli water company, Mekorot, closes the valves that supply Palestinian towns and villages so as not to affect Israeli supplies. This means that illegal Israeli squatters can have their

swimming pools topped up and lawns watered while Palestinians living next to them, on whose land the illegitimate confiscations are situated, do not have enough water for drinking and cooking.

- During the 1967 war, 140 Palestinian wells in the Jordan Valley were destroyed to divert water through Israel's National Water Carrier. Palestinians were allowed to dig only 13 wells between 1967 and 1996, less than the number of wells that dried up during the same period due to Israel's refusal to deepen or rehabilitate existing wells.
- The Gaza Strip relies predominately on wells that are being increasingly infiltrated by salty seawater because Israel is over-pumping the groundwater. UN scientists estimate that Gaza will have no drinkable water within 15 years.
- In Madama village 50km north of Jerusalem Zionist squatters from Yizhar settlement have repeatedly vandalized the villagers' only source of water. They have poured concrete into it, vandalized the connecting pipes and even dropped disposable diapers and other hazardous waste into the springs. Three villagers have been attacked by settlers while trying to repair the water source.
- Many of the most important underground wellsprings in the West Bank are located just to the east of the Green Line dividing Israel from Palestine. Israel has built the Wall not only to annex land but also to annex many of these wells in order to divert water to Israel and its illegal West Bank land confiscations.
- The Wall is not only an Apartheid Wall, but also a water wall. Some of the largest Israeli colonial land grabs in the West Bank (such as Ariel and Qedumin) are built over the Western mountain aquifer, directly in the middle of the northern West Bank agricultural districts, and this is exactly where the Wall cuts deepest into Palestinian territory to surround and annex this vital water source.
- The building of the Wall has caused the village of Falamyia in Qalqiliya district to lose its main source of water. In Jayyous,

a village near Falamyā, all of its seven water wells have been annexed or destroyed by the Apartheid Wall.

- In the West Bank, around 50 groundwater wells and over 200 cisterns have been destroyed or isolated from their owners by the Wall. This water was used for domestic and agricultural needs by over 122,000 people. To build the Wall, 25 wells and cisterns and 35,000m of water pipes have also been destroyed.
- In 2003, the losses incurred by Palestinian farmers due to the Wall diverting water resources has been 2,200 tons of olive oil, 50,000 tons of fruit, and 100,000 tons of vegetables.
- The Wall is obstructing many water run-off flows in the Qalqiliya region that normally divert water to prevent flooding. During heavy rains in February 2005, Israeli soldiers refused to open drainage pipes in Qalqiliya, which led to heavy flood damage to crops and homes there. The Wall also caused severe flooding in Zububa and other villages.¹¹⁰

This somewhat exhaustive look into what goes on with the water supply should serve as an eye-opener for average Muslims. They use this water many times each day for their *wuḍū'*, *ghusl*, and many other purposes thinking that the water we now use is substantially equivalent to what it used to be when *fiqhī* opinions were generated by thinking men in a world that is significantly different from the industrialized, corporate, and utilitarian world of today.

Apart from the physical and chemical aspects of water and its quality, there is the aspect of rinsing away from our body parts and organs the effects of the world on them. In what some people call the mystical aspect of things, *wuḍū'* and *ghusl* are meant to rid our eyes and mouth, and our hands and feet from all activities that may have been erring or incorrect. A kind of “baptismal” occurs every day in the life of *ṣalāh-rendering* Muslims. In this regard they approach Allah (ﷻ) after doing their best to clean (purify) themselves of all words and works that do not meet the divine standard. It may be in this context that the Prophet (ﷺ) said, “*Purification is a portion of commitment [to Allah].*”¹¹¹ One aspect of this commitment to purification is the weekly *ghusl* on Yawm al-Jumu'ah.

Along with it a Muslim wears clean clothes and pleasant fragrance. It is reported that the Prophet (ﷺ), on one occasion when he was delivering his *khutbah*, was exposed to the odor of some people who came into the congregation perspiring; he strongly urged them to bathe, wear clean garments, and put on an agreeable aroma.¹¹² Another hadith indicates that the *ghusl* on Yawm al-Jumu'ah is mandatory upon every adult (grownup).¹¹³

One observation that normally remains unexposed by the light of day is the mentality of some people — mostly Muslims fascinated by everything Euro-American — who say that with the advent of western hygiene there is no longer any need for *wuḍū'* or *ghusl*. So if Euro-Americans bathe themselves in cologne and wash their hands with rubbing alcohol these types of Muslims begin to believe that every other way of doing things, even the methods recommended by their Creator, are either backward or not up to the mark. The blinders that their own inferiority complex forces upon them cannot allow them to see that *wuḍū'* and *ghusl* were not only meant to kill harmful bacteria and germs.¹¹⁴

It is pure water that serves the overall purpose of cleansing our bodies and purifying our souls. Nothing else will do it — neither soap, nor detergent, nor disinfectant, nor anything of the like. And because of this, it will probably be the consciousness of the value of pure water that will motivate perceptive Muslims to pay serious attention to the serious degradation of today's water supply, which has been contaminated by all sorts of toxins and chemicals from the business and corporate interests running the show today. Hygienic sterilization is not an ideal human condition; the ideal human condition is to maintain the God-given balance between benign organisms and harmful organisms, not only in our digestive tracts but also on our body and skin. And the frequent use of virgin water serves, in this writer's opinion, that purpose.

With this in mind, it will be the Qur'anically conscious Muslims who will gain a recognition of the importance of undiminished and ritually-fit water. Before the world's water supply is irreparably poisoned, putting the future of all humanity at risk, the world will have to have a "water conscious" movement. The time is now:

some are saying the entire Pacific Ocean is dying because of the Fukushima nuclear meltdown, overfishing, the greenhouse effect, and the inexorable dumping of industrial wastes into its waters. The Muslims of the Qur'an will qualify either to belong to such a movement, or lead it, only when they rinse their minds with the pure meanings of this cleansing Qur'an.

The last thing to say about this *āyah* (5:6) is that no excuse should be given for not performing each *ṣalāh* within its time frame. That may be why Allah (ﷻ) has given a Muslim the permit of *tayammum* to stand in for *wuḍū'* when he cannot find water. If delaying or deferring the *ṣalāh* was an acceptable practice, the Muslim would have been able to postpone his *ṣalāh* until water was available for him to use, as part of his preparation for the *ṣalāh*. But the *ṣalāh* is so important when it is done within its allocated time that the *tayammum* is another way of indicating there should be no reason to put off or hold up the timely *ṣalāh*.

Hence, *ṣalāh* is a permanent fixture in a Muslim's daily activities. There can be no excuse for rescheduling it, all the more so because there are provisions and accommodations given to individuals who are traveling, in a state of fear, or physically unable to go through the technical postures of the *ṣalāh*. Attention to this detail in the Islamic discipline of a committed Muslim points to how intimate and closely-knit he is with His fond Creator and affectionate Sustainer.

Islam Does Not Exceed Man's Capacity to Keep Pace

The following *āyah* makes it unmistakably clear that Allah (ﷻ) has not and did not intend to burden anyone who assumes his responsibilities in an Islamic lifestyle with an *īmānī* attitude. The very sentence, **"Allah does not want to impose any hardship on you..."** negates any encumbrance a person may encounter in obeying Allah (ﷻ) by fulfilling his duties to Him. In the first instance, the intent here is related to the context of this *āyah* and to all prerequisites for the performance of the *ṣalāh*, as well as to the contractual obligations mentioned in this *sūrah*. And more than that, this

rule is a general one that is interwoven through all Islamic obligations and missions. The overall ambiance of Islamic performance is not attended by either drudgery or brutality, that is, almost impossible to keep up with. This has been reiterated in the context of a harmonious yoking with the *dīn* as the *āyah* below designates,

And strive hard in Allah’s cause with all the striving that is due to Him: it is He who has elected you [to carry His assignment], and has laid no hardship on you in [anything that pertains to] *dīn*, [and made you follow] the doctrine of your forefather Abraham. It is He who has named you — in bygone times as well as in this [divine Writ] — “those who have surrendered themselves to Allah,” so that the Apostle might bear witness to the truth before you, and that you might bear witness to it before all mankind (22:78).

The above, a Makkan *āyah*, sets the ideological tone of Allah’s (ﷻ) divine Script and social order, before the day-to-day and legislative *āyāt* of Madinah were revealed. Thus, Allah’s (ﷻ) instructions to man are not onerous, herculean, or tortuous. There are formidable tasks Muslims have to do, jihad being one of them. In the process, Muslims do have opponents and problems they have to deal with; but such activities are not to be confused with broad-brush generalizations that seek to label Islam as a “very difficult and straining religion” or an “ideology that is exacting and painful.” The responsibilities apt to draw such accusations are primarily two: jihad and *qitāl*. But these are collective efforts — meaning that the burden need not be carried by an individual or a small number of them — that become a necessity; however, these are exceptions to the overall tasks and duties of committed Muslims. In the final analysis, *ḥaraj* (serious distress) is what begets more ominous conditions and leads to more distressful circumstances. But the relative aggravation and minor obstacles that are encountered within a jihad and a *qitāl* are of a positive outcome. There is no demanding task in Islam that results in more injury and harm on an escalating

scale, such as is the case in senseless warfare, war for the “national interest,” and military campaigns to secure consumer markets and natural resources for an expanding economic and industrial base, such as what there is in the *ṭāghūṭī* power culture today.

The *kāfirs* of the world, and the armies of intellectuals, academics, lawyers, and “economists” who rationalize the former’s program, can say what they want, but the truth about this *dīn* is that it is not fanatical and impalpable. It does not require people to give when that is to their own detriment, **“And spend [freely] in Allah’s cause, and let not your own hands throw you into destruction” (2:195)**. Allah (ﷻ) does not expect a Muslim to be attached to some Islamic principles at the expense of others. So a Muslim, in order to maintain life, is given the license to partake of wine or swine. Muslims are not held responsible for fasting in Ramaḍān when they are ill or traveling out of their local region. The license to break the fast is explained in *Sūrah al-Baqarah* by saying that Allah (ﷻ) intends for you what is measured and not what is strenuous.

With this understanding many Islamic scholars who are keen on this allowance have formulated certain legal conventions to explain the fact that Allah (ﷻ) “will go the extra mile” to enable Muslims to do His will. Four of these conventions, which many Muslims may be aware of, are listed herein:

1. when an issue turns tense it is on its way to becoming relaxed;
2. rigor begets comfort;
3. the exclusion of harm takes priority over the inclusion of welfare; and
4. necessity validates (what is otherwise) prohibited.

But how do Islamic scholars, with all of their varying personal characteristics and circumstances, determine what is difficult and what is easy? For instance, some of these scholars are physically more fit than others, some of them more affluent than others, and yet some of them may be a part of governmental circles while others are not. So what ought to qualify our scholars to determine the easy and thus within the reach of the average Muslim, and conversely, the strenu-

ously difficult and thus exempts the average Muslim from doing it? Pointedly, what qualifies an Islamic scholar to draw the line between a *ḥaraj* and its antipode is the scholar's immersion in the daily affairs and lives of the "average" Muslims. An Islamic scholar does not qualify if he is isolated in an institute, spending most of his time reading and writing. A *faqīh*, it may be said, is one who is engrossed in his affairs and absorbed in the affairs of the people around him.

One of the major problems associated with Islamic "scholarship" is the fact that the scholars themselves are not materially immersed in the daily lives of the average people. The Muslims on the street cannot refer to scholars who have, for practical reasons, abandoned mainstream social life. Islamic scholars who live in ivory towers tend to generate idealistic opinions, many times, that cause the ordinary Muslim to run away from such encumbrances. When Muslim scholars desert the commonplace Muslims and then begin to issue edicts that are not "practical," they inadvertently cause the Muslim public to look for answers in other places and by other "authorities" that may, in the cumulative final analysis, cause the Muslim public to think of replacing the dogmatic and "stubborn" insulated scholars with those who understand them better and can relate to their day-to-day lives. This may be one contributing factor that has convinced public opinions here and there in the Muslim world to favor secularism over Islam.

Hatred Should Not Deter from the Dispensation of Justice

With all this understood, the consultative Qur'an now prepares the Muslims to expand their daily contact with Allah (ﷻ) into some of the more consequential affairs of social life. Muslims who share a relationship with Allah (ﷻ) are reminded of their commitment to Him, as well as their pact and dedication to listen and obey Him. This is what makes them the distinguished people they are. As always, man needs a reminder of the power — Allah (ﷻ) — that overshadows and eclipses all other powers; man needs to be reminded of *taqwá* and the human internal thoughts that cannot be hidden from Allah (ﷻ),

And [always] remember the blessings that Allah has bestowed upon you, and the solemn pledge by which He bound you to Himself when you said, “We have heard, and we pay heed.” Hence, remain on guard concerning Allah: verily, Allah has full knowledge of what is in the hearts [of men] (5:7).

This would mean that all the Muslims, from the generation around the Prophet (ﷺ) until now, should remember that they were irreconcilable individuals, feuding families, clashing clans, and generally antagonistic among each other, but when this Islam became their life-manner, their lifestyle, and their life itself, the same bitter rivals suddenly became brothers and sisters, a fraternity of cohesion, and a unity of purpose. The committed Muslims should always bear in mind the pledge they made to Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ), which extends to being a pledge to Allah (ﷻ). They affirmed their will to pay attention to the Prophet (ﷺ), observing his commands and imitating his character — without acrimony and divisions — regardless of where they were in life and how their circumstances may change. They swore to honor what he said to do and to avoid what he said not to do, and to obey him in observing the self-evident truth that he brought forth to liberate them. This pledge came from both men and women — the Prophet (ﷺ) did not discriminate.¹¹⁵ This pledge was inclusive of their oaths to carry the struggle to fighting levels if necessary. This is not new. All of Allah’s Prophets (ﷺ) sought the assurance from their peoples to listen and to obey. Enlisting in Islam itself voluntarily and wholeheartedly carries within it this determination to honor Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) by listening attentively and obeying meticulously. This initial pledge that Muhammad (ﷺ), our Prophet, elicited and procured from the first generation of *mu’mins* is binding on all Muslims until the world comes to an end. With this in mind, the words in these *āyāt* go directly to us.

Therefore, when we decide to go for *tayammum* instead of *wuḍū’*, when we determine that we need a full *ghusl* instead of *wuḍū’* after being sexually aroused, when we decide upon wiping

our feet instead of washing them, or when we estimate and assess what requires unendurable physical and/or mental exertion, then we do so while feeling the power of Allah (ﷻ), the presence of Allah (ﷻ), and the potential of Allah (ﷻ) — in short, we do so in a state of *taqwá*. We also are aware of the fact that Allah (ﷻ) is alert to whatever feeling, notion, or inclination we may have hidden in our hearts or concealed in our conscience: nothing is going to escape the scrutiny of Allah (ﷻ).

With this backdrop, now the words of Allah (ﷻ) mentor the Muslims to approach the highest degree and the ultimate tier in honoring His command. This corresponds to the station Allah (ﷻ) has designated for the *ummaḥ* of Muhammad (ﷺ): its favorable distinction to the leadership of humanity on the basis and terms of justice. Justice means the absence of ego inclinations, personal preferences, and national priorities. None of these factors should influence people who have pledged their lives to Allah (ﷻ) for the cause of justice. Justice cannot be determined by blood preferences, nor can it be regulated by an overriding consideration for what is called “national security” or the “national interest.” Justice has to be done as a “natural” outcome of the solemn pledge the committed and contracted Muslims have with Allah (ﷻ). The last *āyah* stimulates the knowledge in man of Allah’s (ﷻ) power and perception, and hence we read,

O you who are committed [to Allah]! Be ever steadfast in your devotion to Allah, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of anyone lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is closest to being conscious of Allah [and His restorative power]. And remain conscious of Allah’s [forbidding power]: verily, Allah is aware of all that you do (5:8).

Let us recall here that this *sūrah* begins with a reminder for the committed Muslims to honor their contract — the social convention they agreed to conform to — with Allah (ﷻ). Within the

context of these *āyāt*, this contract encompasses, but is not limited to, the following:

1. all edible and healthy meat is *ḥalāl*, with the exception that a Muslim is not allowed to hunt game during the time of Hajj when he is in the state of *iḥrām* (the pilgrim's state of ritual consecration);
2. certain foods are healthy to consume while others, which are unhealthful and noxious, are interdicted, except in the case of human "necessity" — and this exception is determined by the fine-tuning of the Muslim's conscience. This accord and mandate with Allah (ﷻ) is further explained when it comes to hunting and game;
3. marital relations are permissible with people who honor their God-given scripture; hence, women of previous scripture may become wives of committed Muslims provided that their moral character is superb and their chastity is beyond question; and
4. the committed and *masjid-going* Muslims are required to purify their physical and spiritual selves by undergoing the *wuḍū'* and *ghuṣl* as needed.

In the performance of these precious instructions from Allah (ﷻ), which together constitute the binding agreement with Him, any adversity and severity are excluded, as these divine assignments have been crafted according to the capacities and aptitudes of human nature. And it is in this sequence that Allah (ﷻ) tells the earnest and honest Muslims about the full spectrum of this contract, and what the preparatory steps above actually entail: the committed Muslims will have the responsibility of supervising humanity with equity and regulating its social affairs with justice. This means that we Muslims cannot fail on the level of social justice and its global expansion as others before us have.

“O you who are committed [to Allah's ability]! Be active and ascendent for Allah, in affirmation of equity.” This action, activity, and actuation is an order from Allah (ﷻ). The committed Muslims simply do not have the leisure or the luxury to “take time off” or “water-down” this critical *āyah* and its substantial meaning.

This activity and ascendancy for Allah (ﷻ) necessitates the Muslims to be neither passive nor inferior while they are conscious of their pledge to Allah (ﷻ). So they are expected to be active voices and energetic trustees of Allah (ﷻ) in the full spectrum of responsibilities that bind them to His social contract. Conscientious and committed Muslims live at a level of quintessential completion of their solemn word with Allah (ﷻ). This extraordinary motivation makes it impossible for a man of Allah (ﷻ) and a society of Islamic orientation to transgress against anyone or to inflict injury upon others who are not themselves in a mode of hostility or at war with Islam and the Muslims. Our local neighborhoods and our distant continents all are in urgent need of social justice and racial harmony as well as the fair and equitable distribution of wealth.

The absence of social justice is the incurable ailment of empires and superpowers. The rise and fall of governments, authorities, and administrations is inextricably tied to the increasing or declining presence of justice within their body politic: the more justice is done the more lasting they become. Unfortunately, it is an observable social law (*sunnah*) that there has not been a ruling class, kingdom, or conglomerate that has maintained a strict and undeviating adherence to justice. Even the early Muslims in the time period after the first 30 or so years of the Prophet's (ﷺ) passing on, many vestiges of Muslim decision making and rule acquired a marked deviation away from the principles and targets of justice.

In the sequence of revelation prior to the disclosure of this *āyah*, Allah (ﷻ) had cautioned the committed Muslims not to seek vengeance against the *mushriks* of Makkah who had blocked them from having access to the holy precincts at a certain time. Muslims understood that when they themselves have the upper hand and gain the overwhelming power, they should not be vengeful and vindictive. No amount of power should cause Muslims to have impulses of aggression or an urge to launch into a "war of choice." This was in real life the accomplishment of these conscientious committed Muslims: they did not aggress against others who offered them all the emotional incentives to do so. No cumulative effects of oppression or discrimination should induce the powerful Muslims

to tendentiously take out their anger on their rivals and enemies, just for the sake of it. In other words Muslims were entrusted with justice even when they had to secure that justice for people they intensely disliked and detested. Maintaining justice means that the Muslims are going to have to decidedly curtail and eliminate their own predispositions for aggression against those whose history is one of hostility toward oppressed Muslims. Moreover, once these oppressed Muslims have the power themselves they are going to have to supervise a just society and system that will be fair and impartial toward their enemies of yesteryear.

“O you who are committed [to the potency of Allah]! Be energetic and lively for Allah...” and the afterthought to this vigilance on behalf of Allah (ﷻ) is **“...and be on guard concerning Allah as indeed He is experienced with what you do.”** Human composition and custom is inclined to omit the power factor of Allah (ﷻ) from the political and economic decisions that are made by cavalier kings and imperious imperialists. Power, once it is possessed by social beings, has the effect of moving them away from Allah (ﷻ). The first indication of this power distraction from Him is the fact that maximalist potentates and power-mongers do not want to be bothered with “Allah’s (ﷻ) power.” They do not want Prophets (ﷺ) and men of Allah (ﷻ) to remind them that their power is insignificant and not even noteworthy compared to His power. This appears to be why the *āyah* here constructs a direct relationship between Muslims in possession of power and Allah (ﷻ) Himself. In this relationship, the Muslim conscience is highly sensitized to Allah (ﷻ) and His powerfulness and effectiveness. A living and functioning Islamic conscience is always and forever cognizant of Allah’s (ﷻ) ability and power faculty. To this end, committed and allegiant Muslims do not allow worldly powers, “great powers,” “superpowers,” and the like to intrude on this one-on-one relationship with Allah (ﷻ). Empowered Muslims are always attentive to and sensitive about Allah’s (ﷻ) power. Every time the word “*taqwā*” is used, the concept of Allah’s (ﷻ) power comes to mind. And if this is not the case, then the people are not understanding what Allah (ﷻ) is saying to them.

In today's world, it is going to take a sincere and determined effort by the Muslims to rededicate themselves to the power of Allah (ﷻ). The assertion that the Muslims nowadays are more concerned with human military powers than with the power of Allah (ﷻ) should not be a revelation to anyone. Time is running out; the Muslims will have to be coherent on this issue of power, and where it ultimately resides, before they can go on and assume the responsibilities of justice and fairness in this world of melancholy and despotism.

Islamic historical sources indicate that this lesson was revealed in the wake of Banū al-Naḍīr's attempt to kill off Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). Reconstituting the social dynamic, which began in the aftermath of the Battle of Uḥud, will give a more complete meaning to this lesson. Many onlookers in the Arabian Peninsula and also residents of Madinah got the impression that the Muslims, and particularly their leader, were defeated. This impression caused some people — particularly, the Yahūd and the dual-loyalists (*munāfiqs*) — to reveal their innermost feelings and thoughts about Islam, the Qur'an, and especially Muhammad (ﷺ). Whatever these two blocs were not able to express verbally in public due to their cowardice and greed they internalized in emotional clumps of hate and intrigue.

The Muslims, who were scarred by the events at Uḥud, had to withstand the reverberations that were rippling throughout the Arabian Peninsula as the alliance of *mushriks* in and around Makkah felt buoyed by the frustration of Muslims at Uḥud. There was now a new wave of "anti-Islam" that was felt throughout Arabia. And Muhammad (ﷺ) and his close companions had to be on the lookout for external enemies linking up with internal (potential) enemies. As identified above, on the internal front in Madinah, there were two cliques who had to be put under close scrutiny: the Yahūd and the *munāfiqs*. It was during this social dynamic that a person by the name of 'Amr ibn Umayyaḥ al-Ḍamrī killed two individuals from the Kilāb tribe after they had left a place called Bi'r Ma'ūnaḥ.¹¹⁶ The two had been granted "proximity security" by the Prophet (ﷺ) despite the fact that their tribe was still at war with the Islamic authority in Madinah. Not knowing of their immunity

status, al-Ḍamrī assumed that all of Kilāb was hostile to the Muslims and so went ahead and killed them. Since the homicide was considered accidental, consequently, the Prophet (ﷺ) said he would pay ransom money in lieu of punishment. This meant that the victims' first of kin would be compensated financially for the accidental death of their loved ones.

Now, according to the Document of Madinah (Wathīqah al-Madīnah), which was mutually agreed upon and signed by the Prophet (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims on one side and all other non-Muslims on the other, if ransom money or blood money (*diyyah*) had to be paid, then all civil constituencies of Madinah, who were signatories to the Document, were to assist each other in paying what was due. So the Prophet (ﷺ), not having enough in the Islamic treasury, went to Banū al-Naḍīr to seek help in defraying the blood compensation associated with the unintentional death of two innocent victims killed by 'Amr ibn Umayyah al-Ḍamrī. 'Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib, 'Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, and Abū Bakr accompanied the Prophet (ﷺ) to the stronghold of the Jewish tribe in the outskirts of Madinah.

Initially, Banū al-Naḍīr's interlocutors were what can be said nowadays as very diplomatic about the whole affair; they answered the Prophet (ﷺ) in the affirmative and told him to sit down and wait while they collect the necessary amount of money. However, in reality, their public face was disingenuous. On the record they affirmed, "But of course Abū al-Qāsim (meaning Muhammad – ﷺ). Finally you have come to us asking for something! Have a seat. We will provide food for you and try to fulfill our share of your request." But the Prophet (ﷺ), ever on his guard because of the way the Yahūd had behaved in the past, realized that some of them were excluding themselves and having covert discussions. A very important lesson for today's Muslims at this point is how the Prophet (ﷺ), even though he went to ask for financial assistance, did not hang his head or view himself as being so subservient as to be oblivious to what was transpiring around him. It appeared that their discreet discussions were about perfidy and betrayal of the trust that was formalized in the Document of Madinah. It is reported that Ḥuyayy

ibn Akhtab, one of the chieftains of Banū al-Naḍīr, petitioned the younger Yahūdīs to kill the Prophet (ﷺ), “You will never have him this close! We will never have this opportunity again; this man [Muhammad] may never be put in such a [precarious] position again. Hammer him with rocks and kill him, and you will no longer see any harm from him.”¹¹⁷

Banū al-Naḍīr tried to put the Prophet’s (ﷺ) guard down by telling him they will serve him food. In reality, they were buying time for their homicidal plan. These Yahūd, realizing that Muhammad (ﷺ) was with his close companions, said to each other, “Who [from among us] will climb the house and drop a rock on him and relieve us of him?” ‘Amr ibn Jaḥḥāsh ibn Ka‘b volunteered for the job, saying, “I am up to it!” So he actually scaled a wall overlooking the Prophet (ﷺ) and angled to throw down a huge boulder at the right moment.¹¹⁸ The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) sensed something unusual about their clandestine discussions; their body language was very suspicious. Being familiar with individuals and groups of treachery and faithlessness, he recognized they were up to something underhanded. He immediately inferred that these Yahūd were planning a treasonous act. The feeling grew stronger as their comings and goings were increasing; furthermore, time was passing without them giving him a definitive answer. As these events were unfolding, the archangel Gabriel (ﷺ) apprized Muhammad (ﷺ) of their perfidy and betrayal.

Even the companions who did not accompany the Prophet (ﷺ) noticed that a curiously longer length of time had elapsed for such a meeting. They too began to suspect some kind of foul play. Expressing their concern that the Prophet (ﷺ) had spent more time than necessary at Banū al-Naḍīr, they asked a man who was approaching from that area of Madinah about the Prophet (ﷺ).¹¹⁹ Feeling a palpable sense of unease at the thought of something awful in the making, many of them decided to go to the venue of the meeting themselves, and upon reaching there, the Prophet (ﷺ) apprised them of Banū al-Naḍīr’s deceit and disloyalty.

As a result of this treacherous scheme by Banū al-Naḍīr, the Prophet (ﷺ), after returning home, sent an emissary to Banū

al-Naḍīr to tell them to leave Madinah. They refused to do so thinking that their fortifications would protect them. In response to their intransigence, the Prophet (ﷺ), escorted by a large company of his companions, laid siege to Banū al-Naḍīr's enclave for six consecutive nights. Feeling the pressure, Banū al-Naḍīr asked the Prophet (ﷺ) to let them leave, spare them any capital punishment, and allow them to carry whatever their camels could bear.

Some Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ) wanted to make a deterrent example out of Banū al-Naḍīr by inflicting them with the harshest penalty possible for high treason. It was in the context of these real-life events that this *āyah* is revealed. And so, bearing this in mind,

O you who are committed [to the might of Allah]! Be active and engaged for Allah, bearing witness to the truth in all equity; and never let hatred of a people lead you into the sin of deviating from justice. Be just: this is nearest to being aware of Allah [and His austere power]. And remain conscious of Allah's [stern power]: verily, Allah is skilled with all that you do (5:8).

This *āyah* specifically curtails those feelings that lie beneath the surface, feelings that have been in the making for some time, and feelings that have in fact a foundation due to Yahūdī discrimination, elitism, and racism. But the Prophet (ﷺ), who is the executor of Allah's (ﷻ) justice on earth, cannot rule on the basis of pent-up anger. He thus ordered Banū al-Naḍīr to leave Madinah and carry with them whatever they could.

This *āyah*, which is meant to dispirit the feelings of revenge and retaliation, is also said to have been revealed to curtail the potentially vengeful reaction of committed Muslims against the *mushriks* who had blocked access to the Inviolable Masjid (al-Masjid al-Ḥarām) during the year in which the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah was enacted.

Muslims of quality and commitment are justice-centered, justice-focused, and justice-bound. A significant component of their

compact with Allah (ﷻ) revolves around their attention to justice in nearly all aspects of their lives. Muslims, who are supposed to be the living and breathing representatives of the meanings of the divine Writ, realize that securing justice and safeguarding equity are byproducts of the morals, values, rules, and laws vouchsafed to them by their Sustainer. Societies are aware of the varied applications of justice; for instance,

1. *high justice* is the jurisdiction or right to try crimes of every kind, even the highest; this is a privilege claimed and exercised by committed Muslims who are qualified for the task;
2. in *jurisprudence*, justice is the constant and perpetual disposition to render every man his due;
3. *commutative justice* is related to governing contracts; it consists in rendering to every man the exact measure of his dues, without regard to his personal worth or merits, that is, it places all people on an equal footing; and
4. *distributive justice* governs the distribution of rewards and punishments; it assigns to each the rewards that his personal merit or services deserve, or the proper punishment for his crimes. It does not consider all men as equally deserving or equally blameworthy, but differentiates between them, observing a just proportion and comparison.

In the broadest sense, the discernment of *justice* differs little from the consciousness of *virtue*, for it includes within itself almost the whole gamut of virtues. Some say that the highest virtue is justice; others that it is complete virtue. Though there is a very thin line between the two, those who draw such distinctions suggest that while *justice* is qualified by being defined relatively to others, *virtue* is unqualified — a moral state in and of itself. But justice, more often than not, is required to make a distinction between things and actions that are either good or evil, and consists of a virtuous man taking a stand in favor of the one over the other. *Equity* and *justice* are substantially equivalent terms, if not synonymous. Under Islamic provision, which guarantees the right to obtain justice, the “justice” to be administered by courts is not something

abstract or arbitrary as conceived of by a particular judge (common law); rather it is justice adjudicated according to a consistent Qur'anic law.

When it comes to the contract of justice, committed Muslims are answerable to Allah (ﷻ) alone. They consider not the views of “influential” people, nor what their reputations or statuses in society may be. They only consider satisfying their God-given conscience in understanding and implementing their God-revealed scripture. In this direct relationship they bear witness to the truth and justice without favoritism or bias. Justice is the balance of people's rights. Whenever and wherever injustice takes root in a social order, this is an indication that it is on the decline, and if left unchecked, it will finally be consumed by its own accelerating injustice leading to its ultimate disintegration.

This lesson has escaped “power personalities” — even Muslims who became obsessed by their own “absolute” power. They should have been more attendant to the *āyah*, **“Be ever active for the purpose of equity, witnesses unto Allah even if that be against your [own] selves...” (4:135)**. But they may not have been able to convert this principle into a conviction that reins in self-destructive human behavior. This becomes the failure that dooms superpowers and even those social orders called “civilizations.” The superpower culture of today should take note, but those who get drunk on overweening power rarely take notice of how their unjust exercise of power eats away at the foundations of their security and stability in the same way that termites devour wood. It is difficult to be a witness for Allah (ﷻ) against one's own self, family, tribe, nation, or people. But in matters of justice this is exactly what the Muslims are called upon to do. When you have more power, the more responsible you are required to be, and this is simultaneously why man needs the guidance of He who regulates the use of power and why the greatest challenge to His authority is the abuse of the power He integrated into his social law. And hence, in this regard, Allah (ﷻ) commands that no amount of hatred and no depth of hostility should bar the committed Muslims from the application and administration of justice and equity.

It follows then, that with all this put together, the combat-ready Muslims, who are observant of this justice standard, are expected to be fair when they finally bring justice to Palestinian Muslims, Kashmiri Muslims, Balkan Muslims, etc. The Zionists, the Hindus, and the imperialists who have succeeded in working up and spreading forth the unforgiving feelings in oppressed Muslims will themselves be assured of quality justice when these previously oppressed Muslims gain power and become triumphant. All peoples, once Muslims are at the helm of world affairs, will be guaranteed justice. The issue of justice is not one of those often repeated but never implemented Ten Commandments. The affair of justice is not an idealistic dream, even though the dominant power culture would like the oppressed to think so, and to believe that a world of oppression, war, and dislocations is the way the world always was and always will be, so that the former can continue to get away with war crimes and the manufactured social pathology that pits the oppressed against each other rather than against their oppressors. It may tax our nerves and dash our expectations but justice is the rational choice of *mu'mins*, not the emotional outlet of reactionaries.

In our world today, there are many Muslims who are shy or “reasonable” in saying that they once had a team of committed Muslims who practiced justice with a razor-sharp mind. These submissive and subsidiary Muslims regard it to be an exaggeration that the committed Muslims had a spirit and a system of justice in their not-too-distant past. These types of inferior Muslims may not know it, but by thinking this way they actually contribute to the argument that Islam is idealistic and cannot become a bona fide functioning system on earth. The preceding narrative about Banū al-Naḍīr is just one example of how Muslims conducted themselves with justice. Contrast that glowing instance among many in Islamic history with the way the Zionists today treat the Palestinian Muslims. Israeli soldiers kill innocent men, women, and children and know they can get away with it. They are not punished; and even if they are — to keep up appearances — they only get a slap on the wrist, being promoted thereafter. Any impartial historian

who is aware of the millennial history of Jewish persecution would be aghast if he found nothing in the collective mind of Jews pertaining to their just treatment and attempt at inclusion in an Islamic society. But unfortunately, that is the way things are: the Yahūd have opened the floodgates of all the rancor, hatred, and hostilities, which they have accumulated throughout the centuries, and are now, and for over half a century, taking it out with vengeance against people who did them no harm.

It is the Muslims of today who are amassing negative feelings of all sorts against these Zionist oppressors and their imperialist supporters. And it will be the disciplined Muslims who will administer the full measure of justice when the power formula reverts and the committed Muslims regain their status as upholders of justice and maintainers of equity.

In today's world every ideology has its power base, except for committed Muslims. And in these power bases of an assortment of religious persuasions, there are those who praise justice, speak about impartiality, sing the songs of equality, and play the music of nonpartisanship. They wax eloquent when it comes to issues of freedom, liberation, and tolerance. We, the Muslims, are probably incapable of keeping up with their literature about love, compassion, and altruism. But what is the impact of all this on the real world today? All their Hollywood imagery and their media control has not penetrated the soul of the oppressed people; it has not moved masses of people to liberty and an immunity from the arbitrary exercise of power. If there is an encompassing description of today's world, it is the controlled absence of functional justice. The assorted literature of the day is replete with symptoms of injustice. And these symptoms are so numerous that they would fill many volumes. The sample below should give the reader a measure of the immensity of the problem at hand:

1. *War, Military, and Refugees*

- following the end of the Cold War, the United States became the world's only superpower, and it is now responsible for over 40% of world military spending; US military spending increased by 30% from 1998 to 2003;

- at around one trillion dollars, annual world military spending is about two-thirds of what it was at the height of the Cold War in the mid-1980s;
- 22 million people serve in the regular armed forces — about 10% fewer than at the height of the Cold War between the US and USSR in the mid-1980s;
- over 300,000 people below the age of 18, mostly young men or boys, are fighting in wars;
- there have been 125 wars worldwide since the end of the Cold War in late-1989;
- over 7 million people have been killed in wars since 1989 — 75% were civilians;
- war and the extreme abuse of human rights, including torture and rape, go hand in hand;
- the first UN peacekeeping operation started in the Islamic Middle East in 1948 — it is still going; UN peacekeeping operations monitor ceasefires, implement peace agreements and protect civilians; they have been mounted with increasing frequency in the last 20 years;
- over half of the world's 15 million cross-border refugees are Afghans and Palestinians; and
- more than 40 million people who have fled war or repression are unable to return to their homes; many have been made refugees more than once.

2. *Wealth Disparity*

- many people in rich countries live in great poverty (45 million people in the US are below the poverty line), whereas some people in poor countries live in great wealth;
- the average inhabitant of the world's richest country is over 100 times wealthier than the average inhabitant of the poorest, and the global wealth gap keeps on increasing;
- in the year 2000, developing countries' debts amounted to nearly \$2 trillion;
- the poorer countries of the world pay out more in usury on their debts than they receive in economic aid, most of

- which takes the form of what is called “low-interest” loans;
- 16% of the world’s people buy 80% of all consumables; and
- one person in five is living on less than \$1/day.

3. *Business and Commerce*

- 51 of the top 100 economies are corporations, not countries;
- the global trade in illegal drugs is worth twice as much as the motor vehicle industry; a small proportion of the world’s population uses illegal drugs, providing enormous profits in a multinational trade;
- the global prostitution industry was worth \$52 billion in 2002; there is an international trade in images of sexuality and in sex workers, both willing and unwilling; and
- sport — a branch of the entertainment industry in which people both watch and attempt to emulate the stars — is a multi-billion dollar business that consumes disproportionately more value than it produces.

4. *Human Rights*

- only one person in 10 thinks that his government responds to the people’s will;
- by 2025, two-thirds of the world’s population will be short of fresh water for drinking and cleaning;
- the abuse of human rights is worldwide, and global awareness of it a little more than in the past, but there is no evidence that even the most extreme abuses are declining;
- the vulnerability of children meant until recently that children’s rights were taken less seriously and were less well protected than the rights of adults;
- two-thirds of illiterate adults are women; although more people are learning to read and write than ever before, there are still around 860 million illiterate adults worldwide, even in wealthy countries;
- only 20% of the world’s population has access to “free press”; Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights states that everyone has the right to freedom of

opinion and expression, including the right to receive and to communicate information and ideas; sources of news and entertainment proliferate in the rich countries but remain scarce in poor ones;

- poor economic conditions encourage migrants to leave their homes, attracted by better conditions (or the hope of them) abroad; many take terrible risks on the journey and find a cold welcome when they arrive;
- ethnic difference is a source of cohesion in some societies and a source of danger in others; and
- 80% of the world's population professes a religious belief, but far fewer practice their religion; the world's largest religions are Islam (approximately 2.2 billion) and Christianity (close to 1.6 billion).

5. *Health*

- the average life expectancy today in the poorest African countries is the same as in Japan in 1900; increasing affluence leads to increased life expectancy; overall, average life expectancy is rising slowly, but not everywhere;
- two billion people — one-third of the world's population — suffer from malnutrition; there is enough food in the world to feed everybody, but the problem lies in distribution; much is wasted while many starve;
- by 2020, more people will have died from HIV/AIDS than the total killed in both world wars; infection by HIV/AIDS can be prevented, but, so far, cannot be cured;
- someone commits suicide every 40 seconds;
- people in all countries experience mental health disorders, but attitudes and policies to the problem as well as the provision of care vary widely;
- 5 trillion cigarettes are manufactured every year; half of all lifetime smokers die from tobacco related illnesses; and
- one billion adults are overweight and 300 million are obese; eating too much fatty food and sugar, and drinking alcohol, is causing increasing health problems.

6. *The environment*

- every year, between 1991 and 2002, was warmer than the annual average for the previous 30 years; world temperatures appear to be rising, but whether this is a result of a corporate-run world remains controversial in the mainstream media; and
- over 90% of energy used comes from non-renewable sources; everything that runs, runs on energy, and the more the world industrializes and urbanizes, the more energy it uses.¹²⁰

All of these problems and many more cry out for a *dīn* that can eliminate most of them and diminish the rest of them. So far the man-made and man-tried systems have contributed to these problems and have proven incapable of solving them. When these issues are considered in the framework of man's God-given duties of justice, he should be heartened when Allah (ﷻ) says, **“Allah has promised those who are committed to Him and do good works [that] theirs shall be forgiveness of sins, and a mighty reward” (5:9).**

Issues related to health, the environment, human rights, and the proper distribution of food and water are the ones that beckon “good works” after the Muslim makes a secure commitment to Allah (ﷻ). What is required by the adherents and scholars of this Qur'an is to think about doing justice and eliminating injustice in the areas mentioned above. If the committed Muslims get down to addressing the problems on earth and then begin to solve them with an obsession for justice, they can expect to have their sins forgiven followed by a fine reward in an approaching life of bliss.

Therefore, it becomes “contractual” for all *mu'mins* to deconstruct injustice anywhere there is human life and establish justice everywhere committed Muslims are present. This preoccupation with decreasing iniquity and amplifying equity was at one time the compulsion of God-honoring Muslims. That, of course, was before all Islamic headway in this area was cut back to an idealistic and academic understanding of justice, that intrudes little into real life; that is left to be shaped according to the whims of those in power;

that has shrunk into a concept restricted to the domain of the local court and the police precinct; and in which it is postponed for generations and centuries until some prophet or saint comes along to reinstitutionalize the principle of justice in human affairs. No longer are the ineffectual Muslims able to look at global justice, transnational equity, and human fairness.

If Muslims rise to conquer their internal feelings and thoughts of revenge as they are instructed to do here, they are expected to conquer the external feelings and thoughts of economic aggressiveness, corporate acquisitiveness, military belligerence, and jingoistic pugnacity. All these have become the blazing features of our world today from the elites of Wall Street to the paupers of main street.¹²¹

***Kufr* Is the Major Obstacle to Achievement of Social Justice**

Allah has assured those who are committed to Him and do good works [that] theirs shall be forgiveness of sins, and a high-powered reward. Whereas they who are bent on denying [Him His power] and giving the lie to Our [power] manifestations [in human life], they are destined for the blazing fire (5:9–10).

Doing “good works” is to be understood in the context of bringing justice in the lives of real people. When an organized, disciplined, and guided Islamic fellowship sets into motion a worldwide movement for justice as outlined in this Qur’an, then at that time the meanings of this *āyah* come to life and these organized, disciplined, and guided Muslims can look forward to a remission of sin and a sizeable reward.

In this context, it is important to enumerate some of the more prominent aspects and mannerisms of those who stand in the way of the dissemination of social justice. These are the deniers of God, that is, those who take issue with His power presence in human affairs — the *kāfirs*. It cannot be overstated enough, especially since the vast majority of those who interact with the

Qur'an are still using defective translations, that the *kāfirs* are not what is referred to in the English language as *infidels*, *unbelievers*, or any of the other numerous Latin words that distort and disfigure in a very serious way the meaning and implication of the word *kufr* and its derivatives. The word *unbeliever* simply refers to a person who has no religious beliefs, or who does not follow a particular religion. The word *disbeliever* refers to one who refuses to believe something or who lacks religious commitment. The word *heathen* means an unconverted individual of a people who do not acknowledge the God of the Bible; a person who is neither a Jew, nor a Christian, (nor a Muslim); a pagan. In common parlance, heathenism implies being irreligious, uncultured, or uncivilized. The word *pagan* is one of a people or community that observes a polytheistic religion, like the ancient Romans and Greeks; or a person who is neither a Christian, Jew, (or Muslim); or an individual who is irreligious or hedonistic.

Trailing the word *kufr* and its derivatives in the complete Qur'an gives a meaning irreconcilable with the above multiple definitions of the conventional words that are used in Latin languages to try to convey the meaning of *kufr*. Plainly stated, *kufr* is a person's or people's theoretical-cum-practical objection to the involvement of Allah (ﷻ) in the daily, human, and social affairs of man as an individual and man as a civilization. This refraction from acknowledging Allah's (ﷻ) active participation in the will of man, whether it is done by dysfunctional Jews, reclusive Christians, lethargic "Muslims," or anyone else, is referred to as *kufr*. No amount of ceremonial religion or religious philosophies will be able to cover up this fact for any sustained period because Allah's (ﷻ) power presence in the affairs of man will be recognized in due time, either peacefully through man's maturity or apocalyptically through man's ignorance, defiance, and protracted discord with Allah (ﷻ).

It is no mere coincidence that the *āyah* talks about *kufr* in the context of doing justice, **"Whereas they who are bent on denying [Him His power] and giving the lie to Our [power] manifestations [in human life], they are destined for the blazing fire."** Those who aim at denying justice to people in society can only do

so by first destroying God in their conscience, and so they publicize any and all justifications, even outright lies, to disclaim Him. These types of brainwashing operatives from positions of power, from executive offices, from the wide screens of the media, and from college campuses — all of whom are strung together by common interests and shared assumptions — work around the clock on breaking man’s mental relationship with Allah’s (ﷻ) permanent presence in human history and on freezing man’s emotions from Allah’s (ﷻ) immediate presence in developing events and unfolding circumstances. Such are the purveyors of *kufr*.

Allah (ﷻ) manifests His engagement in human life via physical laws and social laws that are calibrated to substantiate each other. What is noticeable is that when it comes to social laws, man has been encountering problems in acknowledging the ascendancy and the centrality of Allah’s (ﷻ) participation in the social dynamic. This is primarily why governmental dictatorships, financial empires, and military establishments have marginalized the importance of justice in human affairs and of its definition in scripture. And because of their systemic exclusion of divine justice from the morals and laws of man, these types of people — *kāfirs* — will end up in the final analysis suffering a fate of agony.

After reading these *āyāt*, there ought to be no illusions about the fact that real people are responsible for maintaining centuries of injustice, generations of oppression, and persistent sequels of premeditated inequity. And thus, “...they are destined for the blazing fire.” It is up to the followers of this Qur’an to keep an eye on this class of public persecutors.

O you who are committed [to Allah’s power participation]! Remember the blessing that Allah bestowed upon you when [hostile] people were about to lay hands on you and He stayed their hands from you. Remain, then, conscious of Allah’s [staying power]: and in Allah let the committed Muslims place their trust (5:11).

In one historical account, this *āyah* refers to a man by the name of Ghawrath ibn al-Hārith, who came to Madinah carrying a sword with the intent of killing Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). It is said he was sent by his people to do so. The Prophet (ﷺ) at the time was unaccompanied and unarmed. Ghawrath stood at the Prophet's (ﷺ) head with his unsheathed sword and said, "Who is to protect you now?" The Prophet (ﷺ) replied, "Allah." Then the sword fell from Ghawrath's hand and the Prophet (ﷺ) picked it up, while asking the same question, "Who is to protect you now?" Ghawrath answered, "Be kind [and the best] in what you have taken [that is, the sword]." The Prophet (ﷺ) then implored him, "Thus bear witness to the fact that there is no deity/authority except Allah and that I am His Messenger." Ghawrath took the oath and added, "You have my word not to fight against you and not to be with any people who are fighting against you." Then the Prophet (ﷺ) released him, whereupon he returned to his people and told them that he had just come back from being with the best of people.¹²²

In another narrative it is said that the sword with which this nomadic Arabian threatened the Prophet (ﷺ) was the Prophet's own sword, which the Prophet had hung on a tree during a pause for relaxation. The man apparently took the unattended sword and began to brandish it in a threatening manner. Then he lost control of what he was doing.¹²³

More background information about this *āyah* places it in the circumstance of the Prophet (ﷺ) going to Banū al-Naḍīr along with 'Alī, 'Umar, and Abū Bakr, the narrative of which was related earlier. It is reported that this *āyah* was revealed to deal with the effects of this matter in the context of total justice.¹²⁴

Sūrah al-Mā'idah was revealed during the Prophet's (ﷺ) Farewell Address at Ḥajjah al-Wadā' even though the whole Banū al-Naḍīr conspiracy happened aforesaid during the fourth year of the Hijrah (some narratives suggest that it happened even before the fourth year). Regardless, this *āyah* brings to mind the necessity of emotional neutrality when sorting out the details of justice. It should serve as a reminder of how Muslims should conduct themselves when other people's aggression and plots may feed the emo-

tionalism of Muslims and cause them to prejudice justice. A history of opposition, persecution, and wars against the committed Muslims does not justify the Muslims “taking it out” on their enemies and in the process disregarding justice or using justice to justify disproportionate action taken for injury or revenge.

Settling scores and reprisals are not characteristic behaviors of committed Muslims. Reprisals, or the forcible taking by one social order of something that belonged to another, in return or satisfaction for an injury committed by the latter on the former does not figure into the Muslims’ judicial and political personality. General reprisals take place by virtue of commissions delivered to officers and citizens of the aggrieved state, directing them to take the persons and property belonging to the offending state wherever found. Negative reprisals take place when a social unit refuses to perfectly fulfill an obligation that it has contracted, or to permit another state to enjoy a right that it justly claims. Positive reprisals consist in seizing the persons and effects belonging to the other social unit, in order to obtain satisfaction. All of these are excluded from the course of divine justice and hence do not feature into the political character of an Islamic authority. Special reprisals are granted in times of peace to particular individuals who have suffered an injury from the citizens or subjects of the other social or national unit. These would have to be determined with their own specifics and contingencies on a case-by-case basis.

Muslims who read and reflect on the meanings of these *āyāt* understand that revenge attacks and striking back with retaliatory vengeance are out of the question. Revenge by one state or sociopolitical order against another is prohibited. Revenge or punishment in return for less proportionate mistreatment or wrongdoing is also tabooed. Similarly, blood feuds maintained by a cycle of revenge are proscribed, and any foreign policy based on revenge or on the regaining of lost territory is disallowed.

The Qur’an encourages fairness, promotes impartiality, and teaches equity. Dispensing justice is a God-given responsibility: *‘amal ṣāliḥ* (good deed). Delivering justice is part of man’s contract with Allah (ﷻ). The bottom line here is that justice can be ren-

dered once the Muslims of quality concern themselves with the power of Allah (ﷻ) before being bothered by lesser powers, such as, for instance, the temporal superpowers of the day, **“Remain, then, on alert to Allah’s power, and in Allah let the committed Muslims place their trust.”**

Broken Pledges Lead to New Covenant-Bearers

- (5:12) And, indeed, Allah accepted a [similar] solemn pledge from the Children of Israel when We caused twelve of their lookout men to be sent [to Canaan as spies]. And Allah said, “Behold, I shall be with you! If your *ṣalāh* becomes the established social norm, and your charity becomes a social institution, and you are committed to My apostles and aid them, and offer up unto Allah a goodly loan, I will surely efface your bad deeds and bring you into gardens through which running waters flow. But he from among you who, after this, denies the truth, will indeed have strayed from the right path.”
- (5:13) Then, for having broken their solemn pledge, We rejected them and caused their hearts to harden, [so that now] they distort the meaning of the [revealed] words, taking them out of their context; and they have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind; and from all but a few of them you will always experience treachery. But pardon them, and forbear: verily, Allah loves the doers of good.
- (5:14) And [likewise], from those who say, “Behold, we are Christians.” We have accepted a solemn pledge — and they, too, have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind; wherefore We have disposed them to enmity and hatred, [to last] until Resurrection Day; and in time Allah will cause them to understand what they have contrived.
- (5:15) O followers of the Bible! Now there has come to you Our Apostle, to make clear to you much of what you have been concealing [from yourselves] of the Bible, and to pardon much. Now there has come unto you from Allah a light, and a clear divine Writ,
- (5:16) Through which Allah shows unto all who seek His goodly acceptance the paths leading to salvation and, by His grace, brings them out of the depths of darkness into the light and guides them onto a straight way.

وَلَقَدْ أَخَذَ اللَّهُ مِيثَاقَ بَنِي إِسْرَائِيلَ وَبَعَثْنَا مِنْهُمُ اثْنَيْ عَشَرَ
 نَقِيبًا وَقَالَ اللَّهُ إِنِّي مَعَكُمْ لَئِنْ أَقَمْتُمُ الصَّلَاةَ وَآتَيْتُمُ
 الزَّكَاةَ وَآمَنْتُمْ بِرُسُلِي وَعَزَّرْتُمُوهُمْ وَأَقْرَضْتُمُ اللَّهَ قَرْضًا
 حَسَنًا لَأُكَفِّرَنَّ عَنْكُمْ سَيِّئَاتِكُمْ وَلَأُدْخِلَنَّكُمْ جَنَّاتٍ
 تَجْرِي مِنْ تَحْتِهَا الْأَنْهَارُ فَمَنْ كَفَرَ بَعْدَ ذَلِكَ مِنْكُمْ
 فَقَدْ ضَلَّ سَوَاءَ السَّبِيلِ ﴿١٢﴾ فِيمَا نَقَضِهِمْ مِيثَاقَهُمْ لَعَنَّاهُمْ
 وَجَعَلْنَا قُلُوبَهُمْ قَلْسِيَةً يُحَرِّفُونَ الْكَلِمَ عَنْ مَوَاضِعِهِ
 وَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ وَلَا نَزَالُ تَطَّلِعُ عَلَى خَائِنَةٍ مِنْهُمْ
 إِلَّا قَلِيلًا مِنْهُمْ فَاعْفُ عَنْهُمْ وَأَصْفَحْ إِنَّ اللَّهَ يُحِبُّ الْمُحْسِنِينَ
 ﴿١٣﴾ وَمِنَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّا نَصْرِي أَخَذْنَا مِيثَاقَهُمْ
 فَنَسُوا حَظًّا مِمَّا ذُكِّرُوا بِهِ فَأَغْرَيْنَا بَيْنَهُمُ الْعَدَاوَةَ
 وَالْبَغْضَاءَ إِلَى يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ وَسَوْفَ يُنَبِّئُهُمُ اللَّهُ بِمَا
 كَانُوا يَصْنَعُونَ ﴿١٤﴾ يَا أَهْلَ الْكِتَابِ قَدْ
 جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ كَثِيرًا مِمَّا كُنْتُمْ
 تُخْفُونَ مِنَ الْكِتَابِ وَيَعْفُو عَنْ كَثِيرٍ قَدْ

جَاءَكُمْ مِنَ اللَّهِ نُورٌ وَكِتَابٌ مُبِينٌ ﴿١٥﴾ يَهْدِي
 بِهِ اللَّهُ مَنِ اتَّبَعَ رِضْوَانَهُ سُبُلَ السَّلَامِ وَيُخْرِجُهُم مِّنَ
 الظُّلُمَاتِ إِلَى النُّورِ بِإِذْنِهِ وَيَهْدِيهِمْ إِلَى صِرَاطٍ
 مُسْتَقِيمٍ ﴿١٦﴾ لَقَدْ كَفَرَ الَّذِينَ قَالُوا إِنَّ اللَّهَ هُوَ
 الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ قُلْ فَمَن يَمْلِكُ مِنَ اللَّهِ شَيْئًا إِنْ
 أَرَادَ أَن يُهْلِكَ الْمَسِيحُ ابْنُ مَرْيَمَ وَأُمُّهُ وَمَن فِي
 الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَلِلَّهِ مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا
 يَخْلُقُ مَا يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٧﴾ وَقَالَتِ الْيَهُودُ
 وَالنَّصَارَى نَحْنُ أَبْنَاءُ اللَّهِ وَأَحِبُّوهُ قُلْ فَلِمَ يُعَذِّبُكُمْ بِذُنُوبِكُمْ
 بَلْ أَنْتُمْ بَشَرٌ مِّمَّنْ خَلَقَ يَعْزُبُ لِمَن يَشَاءُ وَيُعَذِّبُ مَن يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ
 مُلْكُ السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ وَمَا بَيْنَهُمَا وَإِلَيْهِ الْمَصِيرُ ﴿١٨﴾ يَتَأَهَّلَ
 الْكِتَابِ قَدْ جَاءَكُمْ رَسُولُنَا يُبَيِّنُ لَكُمْ عَلَى فَتْرَةٍ مِّنَ الرُّسُلِ أَن تَقُولُوا
 مَا جَاءَنَا مِن بَشِيرٍ وَلَا نَذِيرٍ فَقَدْ جَاءَكُمْ بَشِيرٌ وَنَذِيرٌ وَاللَّهُ عَلَى كُلِّ
 شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿١٩﴾ وَإِذْ قَالَ مُوسَى لِقَوْمِهِ يَا قَوْمِ أذكُرُوا نِعْمَةَ اللَّهِ
 عَلَيْكُمْ إِذْ جَعَلَ فِيكُمْ أَنْبِيَاءَ وَجَعَلَكُمْ مُلُوكًا وَءَاتَاكُمْ مَّا لَمْ يُوْتِ

أَحَدًا مِّنَ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٠﴾ يَقَوْمِ ادْخُلُوا الْأَرْضَ الْمُقَدَّسَةَ الَّتِي كَتَبَ
 اللَّهُ لَكُمْ وَلَا تَرْتُدُّوا عَلَىٰ آدْبَارِكُمْ فَتَنْقَلِبُوا خَاسِرِينَ ﴿٢١﴾ قَالُوا يَمُوسَىٰ
 إِنَّ فِيهَا قَوْمًا جَبَّارِينَ وَإِنَّا لَن نَدْخُلُهَا حَتَّىٰ يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِن
 يَخْرُجُوا مِنْهَا فَإِنَّا دَاخِلُونَ ﴿٢٢﴾ قَالَ رَجُلَانِ مِنَ الَّذِينَ
 يَخَافُونَ أَنعَمَ اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِمَا ادْخُلُوا عَلَيْهِمُ الْبَابَ فَإِذَا دَخَلْتُمُوهُ
 فَإِنَّكُم غَالِبُونَ وَعَلَىٰ اللَّهِ فَتَوَكَّلُوا إِن كُنتُمْ مُؤْمِنِينَ ﴿٢٣﴾ قَالُوا
 يَمُوسَىٰ إِنَّا لَن نَدْخُلُهَا أَبَدًا مَا دَامُوا فِيهَا فَاذْهَبْ أَنتَ وَرَبُّكَ
 فَقَتِلْ إِنَّا هَاهُنَا قَاعِدُونَ ﴿٢٤﴾ قَالَ رَبِّ إِنِّي لَا أَمْلِكُ إِلَّا نَفْسِي
 وَأَخِي ۖ فَافْرُقْ بَيْنَنَا وَبَيْنَ الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٥﴾ قَالَ فَإِنَّهَا
 مُحَرَّمَةٌ عَلَيْهِمْ أَرْبَعِينَ سَنَةً يَتِيهُونَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَلَا تَأْسَ عَلَى
 الْقَوْمِ الْفَاسِقِينَ ﴿٢٦﴾

- (5:17) Indeed, the truth denies those who say, “Behold, God is the Christ, son of Mary.” Say, “And who could have prevailed with Allah in any way had it been His will to destroy the Christ, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone who is on earth — all of them? For, Allah’s is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them; He creates what He wills: and Allah has the power to will anything!”

- (5:18) And [both] the Jews and the Christians say, “We are God’s children, and His beloved ones.” Say, “Why, then, does He cause you to suffer for your sins? No, you are but human beings of His creating. He forgives whom He wills, and He causes to suffer whom He wills: for Allah’s is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and with Him are all journeys’ end.”
- (5:19) O followers of the Bible! Now, after a long time during which no apostles have appeared, there has come to you [this] Our Apostle to make [the truth] clear to you, lest you say, “No bearer of glad tidings has come to us, nor any warner”; for now there has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a warner: since Allah has the power to will anything.
- (5:20) And, lo, Moses said to his people, “O my people! Remember the blessings that Allah bestowed upon you when he raised up prophets among you, and made you your own masters, and granted you [favors] such as He had not granted to anyone else in the world.
- (5:21) “O my people! Enter the holy land that Allah has promised you — but do not turn back [on your faith], for then you will be lost!”
- (5:22) They answered, “O Moses! Behold, ferocious people dwell in that land, and we will surely not enter it unless they depart therefrom; but if they depart therefrom, then, behold, we will enter it.”
- (5:23) [Whereupon] two men from among those who feared [Allah, and] whom Allah had blessed, said, “Enter upon them through the gate — for as soon as you enter it, behold, you shall be victorious! And in Allah you must place your trust if you are [truly] committed to Him!”
- (5:24) But they said, “O Moses! Behold, never shall we enter that [land] so long as those others are in it. Go forth, then, you and your Sustainer, and fight, both of you! We, behold, shall remain here!”
- (5:25) Prayed [Moses], “O my Sustainer! Of none am I master but myself and my brother [Aaron]: draw You, then,

a dividing line between us and these iniquitous folk!”

- (5:26) Answered He, “Then, verily, this [land] shall be forbidden to them for forty years, while they wander on earth, bewildered, to and fro; and sorrow you not over these iniquitous folk” (al-Mā'idah: 12–26).

In winding down the last lesson, the committed Muslims were reminded of their solemn pledge with Allah (ﷻ) — a pledge He enacted with them. He also reminded them of His blessings and favors in addition to His privileges over them in the course of their honoring this earnest pledge. This served as an incentive to take the pledge seriously, to honor it, and to do whatever is required in the affairs of men to uphold and stand up for it. All this can only be done when insignificant Muslims on the expansive earth are wholeheartedly aware of Allah's (ﷻ) capacious presence on the comparatively miniscule earth. This, to reiterate, is the meaning of *taqwá*.

In this new lesson, the Qur'an chronicles the solemn pledges of the Yahūd and people of the Bible. It recounts the punishment and pain they had to endure for abandoning and failing to execute their pledge with Allah (ﷻ). This would serve as a historical object lesson for the Muslims who are now supposed to be “in charge,” and whose role cannot tolerate a repeat performance of the failure of biblical peoples. There is a social law at work here that does not discriminate between Jewish, Christian, and “Muslim” names. Social laws (*sunan*) apply to what people do and not to how they look or how they pray. Social laws have little bearing on a people's verbal relationship with Allah (ﷻ); rather, it is their practical response to Allah (ﷻ) that will contribute to a social consequence of prosperity or a social moment of disaster.

This lesson comes to penetrate the core reality of those who say they are people of God, people of scripture, and people of civilization. This will go a long way in blunting their intrigue and attempted inroads into the Islamic social reality. These people of the Bible also are people of plans and patterns, people of an enduring hostility toward organized Islam, disciplined *īmān*, and the full-fledged meaning of *dīn*. And by putting down Islam as the social

pattern for humanity, they inject their own defective experience into this space and hence have the audacity to give a religious spin to their colonialist character and to offer a religious basis to their imperialist image. The fact of the matter is that they have long ago relinquished a pledge relationship with Allah (ﷻ); they have become Jewish shells and Christian shells — a contour of religiosity but a content of self-centeredness.

This lesson gives the definitive account of the pledge of Mūsá's (ﷺ) people with Allah (ﷻ). These people were delivered from enslavement and humiliation in Egypt, but still they had the chutzpah to abrogate their pledge with God. Accordingly, they were accursed and crestfallen. Following this letdown, Allah (ﷻ) conveys the “pledge experience” of those who say they are Christians. The annulment of their pledge with Allah (ﷻ) caused them to be divided and acrimoniously segregated with seething animosity until the Day of Resurrection. The lesson then goes into the position of Yahūd as they stood on the outskirts of the Holy Land in which entry and settlement was contingent upon them having to honor their pledge with God. However, they were cowards, they were timid, and they proved their material worldliness over their faith in Allah (ﷻ). And their desertion — of the prophet who had been sent to them along with his Dispatcher, despite all that had been done to rescue them from the clutches of tyranny and slavery — has been recorded for all eternity, **“Then, go you and your Sustainer and do the fighting; we shall remain right here, fixed and stock-still.”**

In illuminating the history of this pledge annulment by those who are more prone to biblical bluster than to sincere devotion, the committed Muslims are apprized of how the doctrines of Jews and Christians are no longer consistent with their initial and intended meanings. This internal erosion of meaning, it turns out, is traceable to their pledge abolition. The simple requirement from these people was for them to uphold the superior authority of Allah (ﷻ) by relieving themselves from all other worldly deities and materialistic gods. In doing so they would have yielded to the only true power there is. This only makes sense, since it was He who favored

them, rescued them, and sanctioned them before they went astray. This is what happens to people who revoke their life-and-death pledge with Allah (ﷻ) — they are declared unfit, condemned, fractious, and dislocated.

Nevertheless, despite all that, they are still encouraged to change course and return to their providential Sustainer. In this Prophet — Muhammad (ﷺ) — and in this Qur'an, they have another chance at redeeming themselves and resuming their relationship with Allah (ﷻ). It is as if this Qur'an is a new extension of life for them, saying in a matter-of-fact manner, "Let bygones be bygones and let us begin anew." This also means that all people of scripture, Muslims included — all of us together — are trying to honor the same pledge with the same God. If some of us have failed at one time or another, there is always the opportunity to join hands and work together to honor our word, our commitment, and our pledge with Allah (ﷻ).

In particular, the closest people to this scripture (the Qur'an) in geography, history, and culture are the Jews and the Christians. It only makes sense for this unprejudiced Qur'an to call upon them to join hands and move forward so that we may all together honor Him in the full meaning of the word. Before we can talk about how we can work with each other to realign ourselves — all people of scripture — with His command and counsel, we need to take a closer look at the problem we are trying to solve and so it behooves us to examine how human beings fray their relationship with Allah (ﷻ) by contravening their pledge with Him.

The Human Pledge to Allah (ﷻ) Tolerates No Favoritism

In fact, Allah enacted a [similar] solemn pledge with the Children of Israel when We caused twelve of their reconnoiters to be sent [to Canaan as detectives]. And Allah said, "Behold, I shall be with you! If your *ṣalāh* becomes the established social norm, and your charity becomes the well-founded social institution, and you

are committed to My apostles and aid them, and offer up to Allah an appreciable loan, I will surely efface your bad deeds and bring you into gardens through which running waters flow. But he from among you who, after this, denies the truth, will indeed have strayed from the right path.”

Then, for having broken their solemn pledge, We rejected them and caused their hearts to harden, [so that now] they distort the meaning of the [revealed] words, taking them out of their context; and they have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind; and from all but a few of them you will always experience treachery. But pardon them, and forbear: certainly, Allah loves the doers of good.

And [likewise], from those who say, “Behold, we are Christians.” We have accepted a solemn pledge — and they, too, have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind; wherefore We have caused to rise among them enmity and hatred, [to last] until Resurrection Day: and in time Allah will induce them to understand what they have contrived (5:12–14).

This solemn pledge between Allah (ﷻ) and the Children of Israel (Banū Isrā’īl) is binding on both sides. In short this pledge means in a mutual sense: if you support Me, I will support you. This begins to come out more and more as the *āyāt* move on. In this historical time period, a pact was agreed upon with 12 sentinels from the Children of Israel, each representing a clan descending from Jacob (Israel – ﷻ).¹²⁵ This had become the line of descent from Israel (ﷻ). To these proxies,

Allah said, “Behold! I shall be with you! If your *ṣalāh* becomes the social standard and model, and your charity becomes the thriving wealth in society, and you are committed to My apostles and assist them, and lend Allah a respectable provision [of money], I will for

sure efface your bad deeds and bring you into gardens through which running waters stream. But he from among you who, after this, denies the truth, will indeed have drifted from the right path” (5:12).

Listen to Allah’s (ﷻ) words carefully; He says to Israel’s (ﷻ) grandchildren, “**Behold, I am with you.**” This is the most we (or anyone) can ask of Allah (ﷻ): that He be with us. When you have Allah (ﷻ) with you it does not matter who is against you. This is a remarkable and unparalleled honor. Let Allah (ﷻ) be with us and then let our enemies be whomever they are and however many they are, and however well equipped and combat-ready they are. When Allah (ﷻ) is on your side you have nothing to worry about. In the company of Allah (ﷻ) no one is going to roam aimlessly and live irresponsibly. The companionship of Allah (ﷻ) deflects sorrow, regret, and depression. Knowing that Allah (ﷻ) is next to you brings home a serenity and a security like nothing else. No one could ask for anything more.

This good fellowship of Allah (ﷻ) is not a matter of happenstance or prejudice. Allah (ﷻ) is not with a people because of their genetic makeup or the color of their skin. There is a reason for Allah (ﷻ) being on the side of people. There are also objective conditions for this to happen. The determining factor is that in the mix, there is a pledge — an accord and a mandate. And when there is a pledge, then consequences should be expected in case of a violation or it is not being taken seriously.

Insofar as man is concerned, the conditions of the pledge require him to standardize the *ṣalāh* and regulate the *ḥaḥ*. This does not mean that the *ṣalāh*, or daily “communion” with Allah (ﷻ), should be cheapened into a traditional, habitual, mechanical, or ceremonial performance, or something strictly personal between an individual and his Creator, as is commonplace nowadays. On the contrary, the *ṣalāh* should be motivational, inspirational, and social — something that excites the public mind to mobilize the collective abilities of society to do more. *Ṣalāh* is authenticated by its social value in that its affiliation with the divine impulse should

induce its performers to curb the *faḥshā'* (moral decay), to arrest the *munkar* (social vice), and to curtail their *baghy* (aggression).

The regulation of *zakāh* is tantamount to a free flow of wealth from the “upper classes” of society to its “lower classes.” In a *zakāh*-conscious society, money and assets will no longer be the domain of only the elites and the wealthy. Moneyed people will become convinced that all assets belong to Allah (ﷻ) and as such they will see to it that their wealth expands by allocating a portion of it to the productive, “ready and willing” people in society who are in need of this money. They will have the moral incentive to not stop working fruitfully and live off their accumulated wealth, as their giving will put them somewhat on par with those who do not have the luxury to stop working.

A contract with Allah (ﷻ) means that wealth cannot become a closed-circuit market operation that is the sole possession of the rich and the affluent. The stockpiling of money, wealth, and resources within a tight elite of financiers carries with it a convulsion of economic disparities, key among which is that the majority of people no longer possess any useful purchasing power; they cannot even be the consumers they are supposed to be. At this point an economy comes to a standstill. A society without a responsible flow of money to those who need, or who have less, is vulnerable to serious social disparities, class consciousness, and even warfare between the growing number of poor people and the decreasing number of rich people. Poor people will acquire a complex resentment of the rich and the rich will be ever more dismissive of the hoi polloi. Moral decay will set in on both ends of these extremes — obese lusts on the one and emaciated anger on the other. Thus the vital aspect of *nafaqah*, *ṣadaqah*, and *zakāh*.

Another conditional aspect in fulfillment of their pledge to Allah (ﷻ) is that the people need to maintain a uniform belief in the constancy, similarity, and regularity of all of Allah’s Prophets, Apostles, and Messengers (ﷺ). A renunciation of any of them is equivalent to renouncing them all. And a faithful stand with these Apostles (ﷺ) means that committed servants of Allah (ﷻ) will have to do whatever they can do to support these handpicked rep-

representatives of Allah (ﷻ). However, words of support are not enough, rather, there has to be action, sacrifices, and if it becomes necessary, a military standoff with the enemies of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophets (ﷺ), **“If you do all this then Allah will obliterate your lesser misbehavior and bring you into gardens with running waters beneath them.”**

This is the whole scenario. This is the extent of it. No one need go off into philosophical circles or demagogic speeches. If man honors his part of the contract with Allah (ﷻ) as stated and stipulated above, then he will be in good shape; if he does not then he would have denied the truth of the matter and will have straggled away from the right path,

Then, for having broken their solemn pledge, We rejected them and caused their hearts to harden, [so that, now] they distort the meaning of the [revealed] words, taking them out of their context; and they have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind; and from all but a few you will always experience treachery. But pardon them, and forbear: verily, Allah loves the doers of good (5:13).

There is a tremendous gap between what Allah (ﷻ) relates in these open and explicit *āyāt* and what the media and public opinion are propagandizing today about Zionist Jews. These *āyāt* mince no words about how Zionist Jews are treasonous, and how their hearts have no feeling. Allah (ﷻ) identifies how they spin meanings with skill, relocating relative meanings of one context into similar relative meanings of a different context. These Zionist Jews delete what suits them of Allah's (ﷻ) revelations to serve their own interest. Contrast this reality with the image crafted by today's mass media and the virtual reality that has crept around it. The Zionist Jews according to Hollywood, which they practically own, are God's eternal chosen people. They are the compassionate and fashionable types who care for the “underdog.” They are literalist with scripture to a fault — because of their unmistakable orthodoxy

and religiosity. And they continue to bear the burden of the Israeli sages and the biblical prophets.

When the committed Muslims who are understanding this Qur'an are exposed to this Tinseltown trivia about Zionist Jews they should, if nothing else, discern that the truth has been subverted. Why? Because Allah (ﷻ) speaks the truth while the movie industry and the transmissions that are widely disseminated to the public are lying and covering up. The mannerisms and traits of Zionist Jews when it comes to Muhammad (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims remain as true today, everywhere, as they were in Arabia 14 centuries ago. Anyone scanning and understanding this Qur'an cannot escape the conclusion that these Zionist Jews are cursed and doomed. Their outward and superficial tics divulge their inner and deep-rooted selves. Their very anatomy and composition leak with an eccentricity and disposition that stand outside the parameters of normal human nature. Their very characteristics are void of openhandedness and humanitarianism. Sometimes these Zionist Jews stealthily try to deceive by using tender words when they are scared and "terrorized." Other times they conceal their guile and craftiness by cultured appearances and satin sophistry. Committed Muslims should, with these divine words, have the God-given perceptiveness to see through this sophisticated charade that has to be peddled day and night so as to be transfixed in public consciousness. It should be impossible for a bleeding Muslim of God-commitment to not be able to identify a bloodthirsty Jew of God-denial!

What runs deep in the history and psychology of Zionist Jews is their ability to dislocate God's words and scripture. They began by skewing the scripture God revealed to Moses (ﷺ). They would do this by adding on whatever would serve their interests and justify their own biases. Through the medium of their attitudes of noncompliance and pigheadedness, they would brainwash their own about what God had said. And if that meant they would have to forge some Talmudic teachings, then so be it. They would also subject authentic verses and texts to their worldly prerogatives and clannish priorities to give God's words selfish interpretations of

their own — the rest of humanity be damned! Furthermore they would always conceal and “skip over” particular texts and injunctions that would indict their malicious ambition. The analog of all this in today’s world is to suspend whatever is required of them per their own Torah and prophets, and indulge in a secular world where a “Jew” is still a “Jew” and the goyim still the goyim.

“And from all but a few of them you will always experience perfidy.” These words are descriptive of the first uneasy existence between Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ) and the Islamic society on one hand and the Yahūdī community in Madinah on the other. Those proto-Zionist Jews spared no opportunity to show their distrust toward Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ). With their early Zionist inclinations, they demonstrated a precursor of their present-day falseness and fickleness. Their history in Madinah was about treason and treachery, in one event after another; and so was their history in Arabia. As time marched on until they finally climaxed in their bellicose Israeli bulwark and barricade, they took advantage of every occasion to bring down the authoritative Muslims.

The paradox here is that today’s Zionist Jews, whose forebears were in principle and in practice accommodated by Islamic societies, have turned around to be the ungrateful and venomous enemies of the very people (the Muslims) who never forced them into ghettos and who, if the Jews can shed away their racism, are the closest people to them in culture. By virtue of the *āyāt* above, the Muslims cannot hold all Jewish generations accountable for the treachery of their co-religionists in Madinah; but at the same time, the Muslims cannot be so ignorant as to dismiss the Jews of today from such betrayal when they themselves do not distance their current generations from such deceit and infidelity.

The transient state of Israel is proof positive that Zionist Jews do not deserve any kind of state power or authority. According to the way they tell their own history, God allowed them to have their nation-state in Israel, but instead of being a light unto nations, which is their mandate from God, they engulf the world into their tortuous intrigue by behaving in the worst traditions of the Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Titus, and Hitler among others.¹²⁶

A cursory examination of political Jewish behavior throughout this Qur'anic scripture reveals that these Zionist hearts with Jewish skin do not spare any effort to be at the crest of any anti-Islamic wave. They will dispense with morality and justify using superpowers against the oppressed Muslims, religious arguments against the ostracized Muslims, and worldwide financial alliances against the impoverished Muslims. And this is not the end of it; they will entice, lure, stimulate, and coach the committed Muslims themselves into political traps and military ambushes that will last decades. Buttressing this anti-Islamic animus in the public space are Zionist Jews fuming with their hatred and spinning their doublespeak. On the one hand, they coin words to draw sympathy for their exaggerated tragedies — *holocaust*, *pogroms*, and *anti-Semitism* — while on the other, they originate incendiary slogans to draw anger and vengeance at the overstated “crimes” of their enemies — *Islamofacism*, *Islamophobia*, *Islamic terrorism*, and *Islamic violence*. When it comes to massacring Muslims who honor their pledge with Allah (ﷻ) these Zionist Jews have shown themselves to be hot-headed, cold-blooded, and unrepentant.

Under discussion here is the mainstream of political Judaism — Zionism. This is their image in Allah's (ﷻ) final scripture, the Qur'an of truth. And what it describes is that which happens to people who wiggle out of their pledge with God; they begin to find self-justification for everything they do, usually in contravention to what they have been commanded to do by virtue of their covenant with God. It runs in their history, and the Qur'an apprises the Muslims of their recalcitrant character.

Listen to Allah's (ﷻ) words with as open a mind as possible, **“You will always experience treachery from all but a few of them.”** This treachery could be emotional, it could be verbal, it could be behavioral, it could come in any expression; however, what is constant is that some form of treachery is demonstrated at all times and places. This is their striking and unforgettable position with Allah's Prophet (ﷺ) and the first Islamic authority in Madi-nah. They have not retracted their historical selves. The Qur'an serves as an eternal reminder of this disloyalty and breach of trust

— two permanent features of political Jews and Jewish politicians.

We Muslims are supposed to learn from the Qur'an. It is our adviser and consultant. We can learn nothing from history minus the Qur'an. Only an incomplete reading of this Qur'an can tolerate describing who the Muslims are without describing who their enemies are. The Qur'an offers us protection; and one way of doing so is to tell us who our assailants and antagonists are. These enemies have a bitter history and a sour human nature. We cannot ignore that. We do not need foreign consultants and outside advisers, who have their own interests, to tell us who we are, who our enemies are, and how to fight our wars. This is absurd. We need this Qur'an to tell us the truth. We pay foreign and alien people to advise and guide us; in the meantime we do not have what it takes to read and listen to these precious words that we have here right in front of us. If we invite outside experts to tell us how to behave and how to think we bring along with that their exploitation and their occupation. We are in life-and-death need of reconsulting this Qur'an, re-understanding its profound meanings, and then living up to our solemn pledge to honor Allah (ﷻ) with all our hearts, with all our minds, and with all our lives.

These *āyāt* tell the Muslims exactly what happens to a people when they release themselves from their bond with Allah (ﷻ). There is a human and social precedent here. The Qur'an points to the curse, the exclusion, the emotional stiffness, and the mental trickery that attends breaking away from the most important pledge in life: the solemn pledge with Allah (ﷻ). Because of this Israeli case in point, the responsible Muslims are cautioned from such a serious deviation. And if the Muslims err in this direction, may Allah (ﷻ) forbid, they too will end up being judged by what they did, not by what they said. So those self-satisfied Muslims can babble out their theoretical Islamic credentials as much as they want, but at the end of the day, their words will only mean something if they are on par with their deeds, works, and efforts. A betrayer is a betrayer regardless of his religious clothes and his temple ceremonies. When people (Jews, Christians, and "Muslims") step out of this divine line, they lose their right to be "a light unto the nations"

or “a saved nation” or “the best of nations.” And along this path, they will ultimately coalesce with the ashes of all the other self-immolated *ummaḥs* on the burn pile of human social dysfunction in its commitment to Allah (ﷻ).

The Muslims today are asleep at the steering wheel. They have not experienced a fatal crash because they are moving at a turtle’s pace. They have to wake up, take control of their vehicle, step on the pedal, and blaze a path for a disoriented humanity with a bleak outlook. The social laws (*sunan*) that were at work against the Children of Israel are at work against the “Muslims.” The Muslims do not have a feather in their head that excludes them from Allah’s (ﷻ) corrective justice. Unless the Muslims make a change in their behavior the same social laws will signal their destruction as was the case with Banū Isrā’īl.

When and if the Muslims reach a level of power from which they can control their own destiny according to the Book, they will be able to actualize the meaning of, **“But pardon them, and forbear: for certain, Allah loves those who perfect their performance [of good].”** Treachery, though, should be punishable within the parameters of justice. Accordingly, Allah (ﷻ) ordered His Prophet (ﷺ) to evacuate the treacherous Zionist Jews from Madinah. After that, when the Yahūdī accessories of those who were earlier turned out of Madinah offered their own encore of treachery, they were ordered to evacuate the Arabian Peninsula altogether.

It cannot be reiterated enough that any people who have the chutzpah to annul their allegiance to Allah (ﷻ) will do unbelievable things. In this vein, they killed Allah’s Prophets (ﷺ). They accused Maryam (ﷺ) of promiscuity, despite her exoneration in scripture from their slanderous charge. They insulted her son Jesus (ﷺ) who was sent by Allah (ﷻ) as a lighthouse to all mankind. He wanted to fix the Israeli mindset, but they turned on him and became accomplices to an attempted crucifixion. Some of them still brag about killing him and are proud of such aggressive truculence and unmitigated audacity.

Allah’s (ﷻ) social laws (*sunan*) result in people suffering the consequences of what they deliberately do wrong. So when the

Children of Israel intentionally broke from their pledge with Allah (ﷻ), they incurred the dire consequences: divine condemnation, passionless hearts, and mental tactical maneuvers to try to “outwit” God! This led these disloyal people into objections to Allah (ﷻ), rejection of Him, and sometimes hostility toward Him — in other words, *kufr*. These types of people exclude themselves — by what they do — from Allah’s (ﷻ) mercy and acceptance.

At this point, despite the emphasis in the last several pages on the consequences that accrue from what people do as opposed to who they are or what they say, some readers may still be carrying the misguided notion that Muslim hatred for the Yahūd is endemic, and that it has a scriptural basis. For the record and for posterity, Muhammad (ﷺ) treated the three Yahūdī factions in Madinah — Banū Qaynuqā’, Banū al-Naḍīr, and Banū Qurayzah — upon his arrival there fairly, courteously, and in a civilized manner. He entered into a memorandum of understanding with them called the Document of Madinah (Wathīqah al-Madīnah). Everyone understood that the relationship was peaceful and mutual. The Yahūdī factions understood according to this document that they were not to launch hostilities against the nascent Islamic society and were not to join other hostile forces in acts of war, aggression, or destabilization. That being the reciprocal understanding, the Yahūd were to have full security of life and limb, and possessions and wealth. Their freedom and liberty within this understanding was guaranteed. But within the social developments that were to arise, which exposed their treacherous character, these Yahūdī factions violated the Document of Madinah. They betrayed Allah’s Prophet (ﷺ). They sided with the Qurayshī *mushriks* against the covenant-bearing Muslims, despite signing an agreement to protect the security of Madinah and its residents, Muslims and non-Muslims alike. Generally, these Yahūd became sympathetic and active allies of the Arabian forces who were at war with Islam and the Muslims. For this, the Prophet (ﷺ) expelled them from his jurisdictional territory. Eventually, with their record and history of treason, they were forbidden to reside in al-Ḥijāz and in the Arabian Peninsula. This had nothing to do with their beliefs per se as

much as it had to do with their political treason, their social perfidy, and their economic greed.

Similarly, Allah (ﷻ) told His Prophet (ﷺ) and the community of committed Muslims that those who said they are Christians were also entrusted with a divine pledge (covenant). But they, too, dishonored it; and they, too, had to suffer the consequences,

And [likewise], from those who say, “Behold, we are Christians.” We have accepted a solemn pledge — and they, too, have forgotten much of what they had been told to bear in mind, wherefore We have given rise among them to enmity and hatred, [to last] until Resurrection Day: and in time Allah will cause them to understand what they have contrived (5:14).

Herein is another one of those instances in which the Qur’anic words say a lot more than is obvious at first blush, “...from those who say, ‘Behold, we are Christians.’” This has always been a problem throughout Christian history. Some Christians want to believe that saying something substitutes for being it. They have to understand that words carry meaning when behaviors are associated with them. God’s covenant means in the final analysis that He is the people’s only reference, their only authority, and thus their only deity. But in historical Christianity, there has been a point of departure from this actual covenant — a point where these “Christians” chose to dismiss this essential truth, especially insofar as temporal powers that try to compete with His authority are concerned. Once this fact is omitted from practical life, all other deviations will eventually follow. To complicate matters further, their break with the covenant has inevitably been attended by an unending list of deviations, disputes, and differences between one “Christian” sect and the other. This has generated hot wars and cold wars, violent actions, and deliberately unfriendly relations that will continue until Resurrection Day. This is their payback for abandoning the covenant and annulling their solemn pledge with Allah (ﷻ). What remains is for them to

encounter the results of their own actions when they meet God on the Day of Accountability.

This *āyah* has centuries of validation. The acrimony, splits, belligerence, and hatred never cease to exist among “Christian” sects, divisions, subdivisions, and dissenting cliques. “Christians” may have killed more “Christians” than people who belong to other “religions.” This may have been due to their “religious” differences, or for purposes of “leadership,” or due to social, economic, and political disputes. The more time goes by, the more they seem to hatch new contravention and renewed animosity. The *āyah* lives along with the condition it indicts, “...to last until Resurrection Day.” Allah’s (ﷻ) law is at work: no one can break away from Him and not suffer the menacing consequences. It was not very long after Jesus (ﷺ) departed that these Christians in name departed from the essential fact of Allah’s (ﷻ) oneness and integrity.

Not unlike the people of previous scripture, the Muslims en masse today are guilty of the same pathology of assuming their ceremonial devotions somehow elevate them to an unaccountable status that immunizes them from violating Allah’s (ﷻ) authority and power presence in all other areas of life. And as a consequence, they have had to bear the sum of all the afflictions that rained down upon those who formerly violated their covenant responsibilities. Some of the lessons that are ignored by today’s decision makers in majority Muslim countries can be summarized as follows:

1. political Jews have annulled their covenant with Allah (ﷻ), ergo they will have to endure disapprobation and an exclusion from His mercy;
2. Allah (ﷻ) informs the committed Muslims that the Yahūd have indeed altered His words: the literal as well as the inferred meaning; hence their Torah today is not the Torah that was revealed to Moses (ﷺ);
3. empowered Muslims — and only them — can amnesty and forgive when it is an option, because their predisposition, due to this Qur’an, is not one of vengeance and reprisal;
4. in times of war information gathering and intelligence collection via “spies” is an option;

5. *ṣalāh*, *zakāh*, commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophets (ﷺ), and a public attitude of sharing wealth and giving money are action programs that beget Allah's (ﷻ) benevolence and acceptance; and
6. political Christians have also violated their covenant; they, too, chose to brush aside the higher responsibilities of commitment to God. They declined Islam, the Qur'an, and the mission of the final prophet when Muhammad (ﷺ) presented these to them. Thus, Jews and Christians both have failed to politically uphold an inclusive covenant that stands for justice and indiscriminate equity by honoring a God of ultimate authority, a Scripture of historical continuity, and Prophets (ﷺ) who came to reinforce each other.

Even though the above pertains to Christians and Jews who did not honor their pledge with Allah (ﷻ), to reiterate, their experience and the associated negative consequences are not frozen in time; rather they are a warning to those who would make a similar commitment and then try to back out of it. In the world today, there are Muslims who think that they can also “get away with it.” They think they can undo their covenant with Allah (ﷻ) by offering Him a litany of religious services and an intense ritualistic program. And by so doing, they believe they will be His darlings on earth, just as the scripted peoples of bygone eras believed. We Muslims are not to be judged by our outward voices and appearances; on the contrary, we are to be judged by the efforts and sacrifices that honor our pledge of fealty to Allah (ﷻ).

The whole charade of Islamic *masjid* activities today is nothing more than a vehicle to absorb the Islamic potential and then dissipate it into activities that have little to do with realigning a wayward power culture to Allah's (ﷻ) command. It is a method to distract the Muslim peoples and masses from their higher responsibilities centered around justice and equality. We cannot lose sight of this. There are governments and “religious establishments” in public life that want us to be satisfied with a verbal Qur'an and not a vital Qur'an, with a recited Qur'an and not a realistic Qur'an,

with a partial Qur'an and not a practical Qur'an, and with a spiritual Qur'an and not a systemic Qur'an. Others before us erred on this particular point. We can either choose to join them and suffer as they have or we can choose to bind to Allah (ﷻ) and observe and abide by our *'ahd* and *mithāq*.

Muhammad (ﷺ) Is the People's Prophet

The next Qur'anic lesson features a solid component of the Islamic narrative, and unfortunately today, virtually no bloc of committed Muslims is demonstrating its meaning to the "Jewish" and "Christian" waverers. Muslims should always keep in mind that this Qur'an and Islam itself are meant for all peoples — especially those who have had a scriptural experience, in times past carrying the covenant and bearing the heavenly burden. Muhammad (ﷺ) and his prophethood are facts of life. What distinguishes him is that he is the last prophet in a historical sequence of prophets who were entrusted by Allah (ﷻ) to carry His message and explain His will to their respective communities and peoples.

The ensuing *āyah* tells everyone that this Qur'an has come to Torahic "Jews" and Evangelical "Christians" in the same manner it has come to the scriptureless Arabians. From this time on, all peoples are to refer to this unobstructed Qur'an for direction and satisfaction. No one can escape the fact that, with the revelation of the Qur'an to Muhammad (ﷺ), he is the point of reference as far as scripture is concerned. Truth be told and fact be identified, this Qur'an that Muhammad (ﷺ) received from Allah (ﷻ) uncovers many true statements and religious doctrines heretofore omitted or concealed by the "Jewish" and "Christian" religious establishments. The Qur'an, Allah's (ﷻ) eternal words, declares the fact that many "Jews" and "Christians" have overlooked and broken from their covenant relationship with God. This central backbone of faith and fidelity to Allah (ﷻ), which they should have been very careful in preserving and nurturing, is no longer their mainstay concern.

The Qur'an, in the following *āyah*, shows that Allah (ﷻ) will pardon and relieve them of some of the burdens they incurred in

their tortuous relationship with Him. In setting the scriptural record straight for all times to come, the Qur'an exposes the lapses of Christians and Jews, as well as the retributive justice they brought upon themselves. The accurate words of this truthful Qur'an tell the truth: the "Christians" are wrong when they say that Jesus, the Messiah, the son of Mary (ﷺ), is "God." The Jews and Christians are telling a lie when they say they are God's sons, His chosen race, and His beloved people, thereby projecting a false image of Him as a biased and prejudiced deity. With the presentation of this Qur'an of truth, this Scripture of facts, they now have no excuse to persist in holding their untenable positions. They cannot plead ignorance or pretend to be blind to what is in this Qur'an and what Muhammad (ﷺ) has demonstrated. Let us tune into these refreshing *āyāt*,

O followers of scripture! Now there has come to you Our Apostle, to make clear to you much of what you have been concealing [from yourselves] of scripture, and to pardon much. Now there has come to you from Allah a light, and a clear divine Writ, through which Allah shows to all who seek His goodly acceptance the paths leading to salvation and, by His grace, brings them out of the depths of darkness into the light and guides them to a straight track.

Indeed, the truth denies those who say, "Behold, God is the Christ, son of Mary." Say, "And who could have prevailed with Allah in any way had it been His will to destroy the Christ, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone who is on earth — all of them? For, Allah's is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them; He creates what He wills: and Allah has power to will anything!"

And [both] the Jews and the Christians say, "We are God's children, and His beloved ones." Say, "Why, then, does He cause you to suffer for your sins? No, you are but human beings of His creating. He forgives

whom He wills, and He causes to suffer whom He wills: for Allah's is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and with Him is all journeys' end."

O followers of scripture! Now, after a long time during which no apostles have appeared, there has come to you [this] Our Apostle to make [the truth] clear to you, lest you say, "No bearer of glad tidings has come to us, nor any warner"; for now there has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a warner — since Allah has the power to will anything (5:15–19).

One of the problems with "Jews" and "Christians" is that they have a hard time accepting the fact that "God" would send humanity a prophet who comes from Arabia. There is a mental malfunction or what could be called a psychological exceptionalism within the Judeo-Christian legacy that looks down on "other people." This condescending attitude that is so evident in the religious hierarchy and the spiritual culture of "Jews" and "Christians" has them expecting a prophet to come from within their own context and condition. One can almost hear them say, "But how can it be? How can God send a prophet who is an Arab? A Bedouin? A nomad? Besides, we know these Arabians: we have always looked down on them and they always looked up to us! Furthermore, these Arabians are not familiar with scripture, they have no divine legacy, and they are simply gentiles. The Old Testament and the New Testament belong to us; we are the ones who qualify for bringing about a prophet." There has always been this superiority-inferiority relationship between Jews and Christians on one side and Muslims on the other. They promote themselves as being favored by God through scripture but they refuse to recognize the Qur'an as scripture and Muhammad (ﷺ) as prophet, and thus Muslims, in their view, stagger somewhere between believers and heathens.

Contrary to this supremacy fallacy, Allah (ﷻ) honored the desert people of Arabia with Muhammad (ﷺ) and His guiding Book (the Qur'an). This Judeo-Christian denial of 14 centuries does not

detract in the least from the fact that the committed Muslims themselves know who they are and also know who the “Jews” and who the “Christians” are. There can be no denying that Muhammad (ﷺ) is Allah’s (ﷻ) last and authentic prophet, and that the Qur’an is Allah’s (ﷻ) last and enduring scripture. To put it differently, Allah (ﷻ) has given the gentiles a scripture; and the interactive struggle for Allah (ﷻ) — the gentiles turning Muslims — is a force the world should join and not ignore. These gentiles of yore have come a long way. And the struggle continues.

Not to be downplayed is the historical reality that Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur’an, once assimilated carefully and thoroughly, rendered “gentile” societies the most progressive, with high moral standards and unsurpassed civilizational credentials. There are hundreds of years of an Islamic civilization that not only exceeded the cultures of Jews and Christians in longevity, but also showed the rest of humanity a way above their self-absorbed legal and political behavior. There should be no doubt that Allah (ﷻ) guided this Islamic civilization when it honored Him and carried His word. It would have been impossible for Bedouins and gentiles in Arabia to have reached a civilizational level had it not been for Muhammad (ﷺ), the prophet, and the Qur’an, the scripture. Even today and in the recent past, when Muslims abandoned their Prophet (ﷺ) and eschewed their Qur’an, they lapsed into a condition of obscurity and unimportance. Today’s “shell Muslims” have nothing to offer others because they themselves are empty. The Qur’an’s meanings and message remain what they are regardless of how low or how high the Muslims are in their social development and how serious or silly they are in honoring Allah’s (ﷻ) covenant.

In this lesson, the “word is out” to Jews and Christians. They are told to yield to Allah (ﷻ) by resuming their covenant responsibilities. By acknowledging Muhammad (ﷺ) and by recognizing this Qur’an they do just that: they subject themselves to Allah (ﷻ) and recommence their covenant obligations. If Jews and Christians would care to listen and understand without any prejudice, absent any stereotypes, and minus any notions of racism, they would see that this Qur’an is calling on them to acclaim and accredit this last

of Allah's Prophets (ﷺ) as their own prophet. Muhammad (ﷺ) is not a prophet for the Arabs, from the Arabs, or by the Arabs. He is the Prophet (ﷺ) of all peoples, the barriers of race, ethnic origin, and color notwithstanding. The Jews and Christians are going to have to come to terms with the fact that Allah (ﷻ) has honored a "non-Jew" and a "non-Christian" — an Arabian "goy" — to be His last "biblical" prophet. Once they can wrap their minds around this fact, they will not be able to refute its self-evident truth. This Qur'an and the Prophet (ﷺ) who delivered it do not belong to a nationality or a race. They belong to all people. Let us read the *āyah* now,

O followers of scripture [Jews and Christians]! At present there has come to you Our Apostle, to make clear to you much of what you have been concealing [from yourselves] of the Bible, and to pardon much (5:15).

This sentence makes it clear that Muhammad (ﷺ) was Allah's (ﷻ) prophet sent (not exclusively) to those who consider themselves Jews or Christians. His duty was to show them the way, to explain to them the truth, and to bring to the surface issues they had purposely eclipsed and concealed.

The Muslims of today are going to have to understand that "Jews" and "Christians" have held back facts, truths, and information that were part and parcel of the Bible itself. The "Christians" have covered and cloaked the most essential fact of revelation: the oneness of God. The "Jews" have done the same with matters that are pertinent to the law of God. In the Old Testament, as understood by the majority of Jews, adulterers are stoned and usury is forbidden. But in "Jewish life" no such thing happens. Both the "Jews" and the "Christians" suppressed information they had about the advent of a "non-Jewish" prophet, which they find in their possession as written in the Torah and the Gospel. The final instructions from Allah (ﷻ) to Muhammad (ﷺ) are full of mercy, that is, to pardon them for many of these acts. A comparison of the "rigid" Jewish law with the more charitable Islamic law illustrates how much things have been made easier. This Qur'an of morals and laws

came to annul many regulations that may have had their justification at that time in past history; and so with its advent, the Qur'an's leniency and mercy are to take over in all human societies.

True, harsh punishments and strict prohibitions, which were an integral part of "divine law," chaperoned the obstinate experience of the Children of Israel. These grim and heavy-handed punishments were not enacted in a vacuum. They accompanied the zig-zagging history of the Children of Israel. However, when the unvindictive and refined Qur'an was revealed, it came to deliver the human race from the eccentricities of the Children of Israel to a new beginning, the "Jews" included. Thus,

Right now there has come to you [Jews and Christians] from Allah a light, and a clear divine Writ, through which Allah shows to all who seek His fondness the paths leading to salvation and, by His grace, brings them out of the depths of gloom into the spark of light and guides them to an exact track (5:15–16).

This *āyah* says it best. This Book, the Qur'an, is a source of illumination, visible light, and a spark of radiance. The light that is emitted by this Qur'an shines in the heart, radiates through human behavior, and glows in society. Life itself, once the Qur'an is at its center, beams with an unmistakable aura. The Islamic social psychology is flush with a certain luster and scintillation. This Qur'an lights up our lives like nothing else. Regrettably, when Muslim hearts and minds closed the Book more than they opened it, the halo of light that once belonged to an Islamic society and civilization began to fade. The results were inevitable; no one can run away from this meaning, not even Muslims. The way to peace is via Allah (ﷻ),

Straight away there has come to you from Allah a light, and a clear divine Writ, through which Allah shows to all who seek His affection the paths leading to peace and, by His grace, brings them out of the

depths of darkness into the light and guides them to a straight way (5:15–16).

The Judeo-Christian world though cannot find peace because it conceals the truth that comes from Allah (ﷻ) and withholds vital scriptural information from the public. At this point, it will be illuminating to place these words of Allah (ﷻ) into the moving picture of a peace-lacking, God-forsaking, Judeo-Christian culture that refuses to make contact with Allah (ﷻ) through this peace-making Qur'an.

Seeds of Social Peace Are Found in Man's Relationship with God

Almost everyone will agree that peace is the most inclusive of all virtues. Ideally it embraces the whole human race and nature as well; it is earnestly desired by the great mass of people of all persuasions, cultures, and orientations. For achieving a semblance of peace, what is required is a complementary effort from all sectors of society that are equipped with the necessary skills and experiences for the purpose of public security and peace of mind.

Global peace with its all-inclusive feature is conceived of in many ways. The Greek word for peace, *eirene*, and the Latin word, *pax*, refer to a ceasefire or a cessation of acts of war. This would mean that man in the Greek and Roman worlds understood peace as the non-existence of war. *Santi*, which is the word for peace in India, places more emphasis on tranquility of self and a spiritual peace.

Delving into the troubled Western mind to try to come to grips with what "peace" really means to men who have no God to rely upon and no preserved scripture to refer to will necessarily meander through a broad range of positions and counter-positions. The more negative idea of peace and the more affirmative idea seem themselves to reflect different views of human nature. If one thinks of human beings as essentially acquisitive and aggressive, then their mutual relations will be primarily self-assertive and war-like. The quest for peace will be the problem of finding ways to diminish the more damaging forms of hostility, through pacts or

agreements that impose restraint. A classic statement of this point of view was given by the English philosopher Thomas Hobbes in his book *Leviathan* (1651).¹²⁷ He held that the natural state of the human race is one of unrestricted war, everyone against everyone else. But experience teaches that a life of universal conflict is, in Hobbes' famous words, "...solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short." So, driven by "fear of death, desire of such things as are necessary to spacious living, and a hope by their industry to obtain them," human beings seek peace. But peace conceived in this way is a fragile structure masking the underlying battle. Even war is nothing exceptional but just the clear manifestation of the human condition.¹²⁸ In the words of another famous writer on these matters, Carl von Clausewitz, "war is nothing but a continuation of political intercourse with a mixture of other means — merely another kind of writing and language for political thought."¹²⁹

An altogether opposing view of peace in the quickly secularizing Judeo-Christian culture found expression through another English philosopher, John Locke, in his treatises *Of Civil Government* (1689).¹³⁰ He, contrary to Hobbes, denied that the state of human nature is one of war. The state of nature, he claimed, is "men living together according to reason." This is the doctrine of "Natural Law" based on universal reason, a law that "...teaches all mankind who will but consult it, that being all equal and independent, no one ought to harm another in his life, health, liberty and possessions."¹³¹

Here, in the Judeo-Christian-turned-secular mind, there are two views of the concept of peace and of human nature itself that are in headlong collision with one another. Should Hobbes be set aside as too cynical in his opinion of the human race? Or should it be said that Locke was far too optimistic? The question, in the absence of vital information from the Creator, cannot be decided in a conclusive manner; the two diverging views have to be explained further for some type of conclusion.

In the Hobbesian, or negative, understanding of peace, human beings are viewed as incorrigibly aggressive and self-seeking, so that peace is a damage-limitation exercise superimposed on

unrelenting conflict. Though the value of efforts to reduce the level of violence in human affairs cannot be underestimated, a realistic view of Judeo-Christian and European society is bound to concede a considerable measure of truth to Hobbes' dictum that the state of nature is a state of war, at least in some periods of human history.

In the Judeo-Christian Middle Ages, when central governments in Europe were weak and there were many powerful private armies, attempts were made by ecclesiastics to curb unrestrained violence, and these had some merit. In the year 989CE some Church clergymen came up with what is called the Peace of God annunciation that sought to exempt the churches from plundering and use in war, and to extend some protection to noncombatants, such as peasants and merchants. In 1027CE another such annunciation by the name Truce of God extended the restrictions by forbidding fighting over weekends, the days of Christ's passion.¹³² Never fully enforced, these regulations exercised some restraint on the disorders of the time. No truly affirmative concept of peace was operative, and the irony of this mainly Christian or Church attempt at peace was apparent when the Council of Clermont (in France) launched the First Crusade in 1095CE.¹³³

A secular interest in peace appears without any reference to Church and religion in the Euro-American domain, particularly in the development of the idea of international law by Grotius and others.¹³⁴ The most significant work coming out of this tradition was Immanuel Kant's treatise *Perpetual Peace* (1795).¹³⁵ Kant had no illusions about the human race, and followed Hobbes in his understanding of the nature of society and the necessity of the state to control the warring tendencies of individual human beings. But at the same time he shared Locke's appreciation for rationality and believed that, just as human individuals have learned or are learning to live reasonably within the state, so states must move toward some kind of federation. He set out stages by which they could move toward such a goal, although he seems to have regarded it as an ideal rather than something that would be historically achieved. A presupposition of such development, he held, was true democracy in all the participating states and an

absence of any secret aggressive motives in their diplomatic dealings with each other.¹³⁶

The preceding arguments provide a segue into the Euro-American and Judeo-Christian theories of just war. Though they have their origins in the writings of Saints Augustine and Aquinas, they are still discussed today sans their religious undercurrents.¹³⁷ They deplore the unrestrained violence of war but accept that sometimes war is justifiable. The expression *just war* is unfortunate, for, as some would say, "...war in its fairest form implies a perpetual violation of humanity and justice."¹³⁸ The conditions for a just war have been variously stated but the following six points may be considered basic:

1. there must be a just cause;
2. violence is the only option left to effect change;
3. there must be a properly constituted authority to wage war;
4. there must be a feasible goal;
5. the means must be appropriate to the end; and
6. reconciliation is sought as the ultimate goal.

It is sometimes argued that modern warfare is so destructive that the fifth condition above cannot be satisfied, but this is at least debatable, and in fact certain kinds of weapons have not been put to use in modern wars. So the theory of the just war has probably had some restraining effect on warlike violence and, as some wars at the end of the 20th century and the beginning of the 21st century in the secular and democratic countries have demonstrated, there are populations who are not likely to support their government's declared wars (the US and European government's involvement in the Persian Gulf wars) unless they are reasonably satisfied that the war can be justified. On the other hand, the nagging question remains whether wrongs can be put aright through the perpetration of fresh wrongs that are inevitable in the conduct of war.¹³⁹

In 1989, the ending of the "Cold War" between the USA and its allies on one side and the Soviet Union and its allies on the other was hailed, perhaps too enthusiastically, as the end of one era and the beginning of a "new world order." Certainly the Cold War

illustrates the ultimate stage in what has been called above the “negative” view of peace, because for more than 40 years, in spite of extreme rivalry between the two superpowers, overt violence was restricted to some local wars, admittedly destructive ones. That time was anxious and dangerous, but the balance of power or terror had the advantage of preserving an outward or negative peace. But the events of 1989 encouraged the hopes of something better, and despite the looming shadow of unaccountable US power coupled with the overeager trigger finger of its chief executives, some callow intellectuals overawed by US exceptionalism began to consider a more affirmative concept of peace.¹⁴⁰ However, it would not be long before these types would have to grow up, take off their colored glasses, and come to grips with their own sordid history as it informs what an unchecked aggressor does when he has too much power. The recent Judeo-Christian-cum-secular declared war on international terrorism (by which they mean Islamic self-determination) tips the argument more toward Hobbes than Locke.

Of course there are those who jump the gun and place their faith in technology. Can technology be harnessed in the service of peace, as it has unfortunately been made to serve war? Surely there are the means nowadays to improve agriculture and food supplies worldwide, and that would be an obvious and important step toward the spread of peace. The political will has been lacking and even the United Nations has done less than might have been hoped. Fortunately voluntary agencies have stepped into the vacuum, but even so, their efforts fall short of what is needed.

In other areas, apparently too little has been done to study what may be called the “techniques” of peace. There are still many military academies where the “arts” of war are studied, but only a relatively few universities (and not the best known) have departments of peace studies, specifically intended to investigate how best to help in the building of peace. So many factors and so many dimensions enter into the building and maintaining of an affirmatively peaceful world community that much study is necessary, and this calls for a suitable allocation from the vast sums that are each year contributed to research institutions.¹⁴¹

But the problem goes beyond technology and social analysis. And the minds in the West say as much. This is the point at which “religion” becomes relevant. Most religions have strongly advocated the cause of peace, claiming themselves to bring to individuals an inner peace that heals and reconciles the conflicts every human being experiences within. Moreover, religions give a sense of unity to the human race through their teaching that human beings are the creatures of God, in relation to whom they are like children of one family.

It is interesting to note that even in the highly “sophisticated” European Union, the members, once at enmity with one another, have chosen Schiller’s anthem, in its setting by Beethoven, as the one that celebrates their new unity.¹⁴² It embodies their unity as a family (*alle Menschen werden Bruder*) and this leads to the climax and basis of their unity (*berm Sternenzelt muss ein lieber Vater wohnen*). Some would speak of this sublime chorus as a vision of the harmony between human and divine-cosmic order in an age when self-alienation was already on the horizon. And some Euro-centrics would say that perhaps it will only be when Europe and the entire world has really appropriated such a mystical or metaphysical vision of unity that we shall have the political will to pursue with determination a truly affirmative peace for the human race.¹⁴³

In contrasting the negative (Hobbes’) and affirmative (Locke’s) concepts of peace, the secular mind has been careful not to suggest that one of these excludes or renders superfluous the other. The affirmative view has certainly more depth and in the long run would seem to hold out more promise of a genuinely peaceful future for humanity. But it was pointed out that, in an imperfect world where hostilities continue to arise, peace in the negative sense (that is, the absence of overt violence) is not always to be despised and may sometimes be the best solution available at a particular juncture of affairs.

The bottom line is that making and maintaining peace is a never-ending task in a world having no perfect scripture to rely upon. In recent years, much media attention and political wran-

gling has been devoted to the notion of a “peace process,” and this language makes clear what may be called the “dynamics” of peace — a process in which there must often be a dialectical interplay of more negative and more affirmative ways of conceiving peace. The word *peace* does suggest to most people rest, inaction, even inertia, yet the truth of the matter is that peace demands constant effort for its achievement and maintenance. This effort cannot be limited or sustained by a mind, a think tank, or strategic institutions that are detached from the source of peace and from the provider of peace, that is, Allah (ﷻ) Himself.

Although people the world over long for peace, the motivation behind this longing is mixed, and for many it seems to be inspired not so much by a vision of human solidarity as simply by the selfish wish to be allowed to achieve one’s private ambitions and fulfill one’s desires regardless of what is going on in the world around. In a post-religious Europe, in the secular world of today, and in a world probing for authentic peace, the secularly institutionalized formats of peace do not abolish conflict, but rather try to contain it and divert it toward constructive ends.

This is especially clear in the “Christian” understanding of peace. The New Testament takes over the Hebrew notion of *shalom*, already taught by the prophets who associated it with a messianic kingdom of the future. Thus, in the “Christian” version or interpretation of it, while Jesus (ﷺ) taught nonviolence or even non-resistance and promised his disciples the gift of peace (John, 14:27), he realized there would be a long struggle toward that goal and therefore had to warn them that sometimes he would bring them not peace but a sword (Matthew, 10:34). Hence, what would constitute the Hebrew *shalom* is not the rest that leaves things just as they are but, of necessity, the removal of everything standing in the way of that full flourishing of human life. Peace, for instance, must eliminate injustice, but it will seek to do so by nonviolent means. A Brazilian bishop, Dom Helder Camara, put it very well, “There is no doubt that Christ came to bring peace. But not the peace of stagnant swamps, not peace based on injustice, not peace that is the opposite of development.”¹⁴⁴

Thus even though the Hobbesian dialectic has appertained to the bulk of its history, the secular Judeo-Christian world, in order to try to ensure its own survival, has come to accept that the “natural” state for human beings is living together according to reason (Locke) or living together as a worldwide family (the remnants of the Judeo-Christian religious belief). It is also important for these types of people who abandon God to reconcile themselves to such beliefs because they affect conduct, and if people believe that the state of nature is a state of war and that human beings are essentially aggressive, then they will act accordingly and there will be little chance of ever achieving a true peace. Perhaps it is only religion that can give these God-deniers the eschatological vision of a commonwealth of peace (“the kingdom of God”), and with the vision the political or communal will to embark on a “peace process” directed to its realization. That process would demand all the courage, ingenuity, resources and sacrifices that have been traditionally called forth by war.

After this venture into the current trends and fads about peace that originate from the secular Judeo-Christian world and then make their way into Muslim thoughts and territories, it should become apparent that the only reliable reference on this matter is the holy Book of Allah (ﷻ) in front of us. This Qur’an tells these “Jews” and “Christians” to realign themselves with God so that they may be able to reach the status of peace in their mortal selves and in their preoccupied masses

O people of scripture, Jews and Christians, Our Apostle [Muhammad] has come to you. He comes to show you much of what you have been hiding of scripture and he [Muhammad] comes to you to excuse much of what had been binding on you. Thus has come to you a light from Allah and an uncluttered holy Writ. With it [this holy Writ] Allah guides those who follow in His satisfaction to the paths of peace by delivering them from dusk to light with His permission, and He guides them to a forthright path (5:15–16).

The first part of these two *āyāt* is said to have been revealed when the Jews were caught concealing the scriptural punishment for adultery on an occasion where a legal issue pertaining to extra-marital intimacy was presented to Allah's Prophet (ﷺ). More details on this matter are provided later in this *sūrah*. In any case, the overriding meaning of this lesson is that the Prophet (ﷺ) was showing the Jews and Christians everything they were obscuring and effacing from their own scriptural texts. Included within this Judeo-Christian coverup was the legal penalty for fornication and adultery.

The following passage appears in the Book of Deuteronomy (Contemporary English Version),

People of Israel, if a man is caught having sex with someone else's wife, you must put them both to death. That way, you will get rid of the evil they have done in Israel. If a man is caught in town having sex with an engaged woman who isn't screaming for help, they both must be put to death. The man is guilty of having sex with a married woman. And the woman is guilty because she didn't call for help, even though she was inside a town and people were nearby. Take them both to the town gate and stone them to death. You must get rid of the evil they brought into your community (22:22–24).

When the rabbis of Yahūd were in denial of this penalty the Prophet (ﷺ) solicited and appealed earnestly with the Yahūdī sage Ibn Šūriyā until he finally declared the truth about this matter. This is one instance in which the Yahūd were hiding what was legally, by scripture, binding on them. They also hid the words and verses in their scripture that foretold of Muhammad's (ﷺ) prophethood, or they twisted their meanings to deflect from this historical event. This is equally true of both "Jews" and "Christians." Moreover, all of this does not even speak of portions of scripture they have "thrown away" or put out of mind and forgotten. One of the more glaring omissions is the accountability in the world to come and the reward or punishment that follows. The Torah because of

Yahūdī “editing” and “versioning” does not carry this integral part of faith.

“There has come unto you [Jews and Christians] from Allah a light and a distinct Book...” What is meant by light here? It could mean Islam. It could mean Muhammad (ﷺ). And it could mean the Qur’an. These three or the combination of these three enlighten the heart and give spiritual insight to the mind; they are to the spirit what light is to the eye. If it were not for these three ingredients no reasonable person would be able to ascertain the truth about Allah (ﷻ) and His *dīn*. Absent the Qur’an, the Prophet (ﷺ), and Islam no one would be able to know what parts of the Bible were omitted and what parts were distorted. These three references are all that is necessary to turn the light on today’s Jewish and Christian beliefs. It would not be too forward to say that the human disinterest and detachment within the Judeo-Christian realm is due to the shifts and contradictions by Christian clergy and Jewish jurists pertaining to the essence of scripture and the truth of revelation.

There are *āyāt* that would indicate the word *nūr* to be in reference to the Qur’an,

And so those who commit themselves to him [Muhammad] by strengthening and supporting him and follow the light that has been brought down with him, they are the successful ones (7:157);

Then commit to Allah and His Apostle [Muhammad] and to the light [the Qur’an] that We have brought down with him (64:8).

This does not exclude the understanding that the *nūr* is the Prophet (ﷺ) himself. A mature Muslim mind would want to blend the Prophet (ﷺ), the Qur’an, and Islam as being this *nūr*, without any mental contradictions or sectarian types of contentions. The Prophet (ﷺ) was the embodiment of this Qur’an as his wife ‘Ā’ishah said, “His demeanor was the Qur’an.” In *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb*, the Qur’an

itself attests to the fact that the Prophet (ﷺ) was a shining light, by using the words *sirājan munīran* (a radiating lantern).¹⁴⁵

It is here that humanity will find its ways and methods to peace. The overall conjoined meanings of the Qur'an and Muhammad (ﷺ) offer the individual peace of mind and offer societies peace of coexistence. Attending conscientiously to these enlightening words from Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), which are meant for real life, is enough to secure tranquility in a person's own self, and peace and security in social aggregates that coalesce around family responsibilities and civic obligations. Peace is in God's hands and He has made it within easy reach provided we pursue the overall meanings of the Book, resisting any temptations to delete scriptural passages here or there because of some special interest or to overlook others because "it suits us better." Peace is about approaching this eternal Scripture (the Qur'an) and the living example of the Prophet (ﷺ) with all our concentration and emphasis on a free conscience, a pivotal justice, and an interaction among people that excludes elitism, racism, prejudice, and all manifestations of ego.

Another insight of this light from heaven is that it delivers people from the obscurities of paganism, the superstitions of idolatry, and the rat races of corporate gods. Lower class people have always been exploited by the militarily powerful and the financially influential. The exploitation of these commoners has been perfected through the institution of religion as a hierarchy, without the motivation, dedication, and ambition for justice. People — whenever justice is absent from any "religion" — become bondservants of powerful military organizations or Machiavellian financial interests. A life in which man labors to satisfy the false institutions of the military and the economy that have secularized religions into dismissing the centrality of justice from their liturgies is simply slavery by other names. The light that comes from Allah (ﷻ) takes the common man out of the dark dungeons of a slave life.

Toward this end, with justice as the centerpiece of Allah's (ﷻ) scripture and revelation, liberation is light, because this means there are no longer any military masters, financial masters, or religious masters to serve. A key distinction between Islam on

one side and “Judaism” and “Christianity” on the other is that Islam has proven to be resistant to the taming of militaries and the domestication of financial empires. On the other hand what has become Judaism and what has morphed into Christianity have found their comfortable niche within the holy duo of corporate militaries and militant economics. Every citizen living within the trinity of a quiet convergence of the military, the government, and the “church,” with an obvious common denominator of excluding justice from peoples’ lives, is a slave whose god is an abstract idea. The light that is mentioned in this *āyah* repositions people outside of this worldly conspiracy that nurtures the amicable coexistence of hostile militaries with offensive business along with a religion that blesses (or at best, is passive to) this alliance,

And by His grace and grasp, [Allah] brings them out of the depths of [such] darkness into the light and guides them to a straight course [forward] (5:16).

Had it not been for this Prophet (ﷺ) and this Qur’an how would ordinary people know what is really going on in the world around them? There are no “religions” to show the bigger picture, no “religions” to expose the “men behind the scenes,” and no “religions” that follow the threads of this “upper-class” connivance (military, governmental, and financial) with a view to placing it in a position of incompatibility with justice.

Humanity is quickly arriving at its own man-made dead end. The ideologies and strategies of the modern-day superpowers and imperial powers along with their colonial antecedents have been exhausted and are going nowhere fast. People are looking for a way out. No space missions are going to deliver humanity from the phobia that has settled on planet Earth because of racism, classism, imperialism, and Zionism. The answer is not in gaining a foothold on another planet and then repeating the same mistakes of hubris there. The solution is to look into our own souls, scrutinize our own ideas, and reconsider our own methods. The way out of this phobic disorder is a straight march forward with a transparent soul and high

spirit. This is what the Qur'an does. When the Qur'an goes directly to a person's self and refines it, when it touches the human heart and moves it, when it defines human effort and perfects it, when the Qur'an blends into the fiber of self and the fabric of society, then it produces the human expression of justice like nothing else. It is the light, it is the direction, and it is the way: *al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm*.

In a concise rebuke to the misguided human impressions of peace as expounded by Hobbes and Locke, neither one of whom could find a satisfying answer to whether societies and people are predisposed to competitive anarchy or to cooperative orderliness, the Qur'an and Muhammad (ﷺ) specify that the seeds of social peace are found in man's relationship with Allah (ﷻ). If man begins to spoil this relationship he enters into a turbulent phase or zone. The incrementally dysfunctional relationship with Allah (ﷻ) begins to breed more instability until man winds up in a world of friction, fighting, and divisive frays. No human society can hide Allah's (ﷻ) words, alter the meanings of scripture, or confuse the context of the Bible, and then expect to live in peace. Peace begins in a heart that belongs to God. Peace comes from a God that is admired by man. Peace does not come from a *pax Americana*, a *pax Hebraica*, or a *pax Europa*. The Qur'an demonstrates that human nature has a tendency toward the world that Hobbes speaks about and it equally has a tendency toward the world of Locke. But these are only tendencies. The direction man assumes is an outcome of his own pursuit. And in the absence of a God-given direction, man can go any way he desires and wind up with local feuds, regional tension, transnational conflicts, and world wars. That is what has happened in the Judeo-Christian context. However, because this context still has "bits and pieces" of scripture within it, it is hoped that with some words of wisdom and true statements of scripture the damage can be minimized and people with good will and common sense will see the light.

No one can talk about peace and give it due weight without concurrently speaking about justice. The red flags all over the Judeo-Christian state sponsored religion are its inability to present a cogent definition of peace because it does not have the inspira-

tion to properly represent justice. That inspiration is found here in this unalterable and immutable Qur'an, this source of illumination, this *nūr*.

Jesus (ﷺ) Was an Impeccable Human Prophet, But Not God

Indeed, the truth denies those who say, “Behold, God is the Christ, son of Mary.” Say, “And who could have prevailed with Allah in any way had it been His will to destroy the Christ, son of Mary, and his mother, and everyone who is on earth — all of them? For, Allah’s is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them; He creates what He wills: and Allah has the power to will anything!”

And [both] the Jews and the Christians say, “We are God’s children, and His beloved ones.” Say, “Why, then, does He cause you to suffer for your sins? No, you are but human beings of His creating. He forgives whom He wills, and He causes to suffer whom He wills: for Allah’s is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and with Him is all journeys’ end.”

O followers of the Bible! Now, after a long time during which no apostles have appeared, there has come to you [this] Our Apostle to make [the truth] clear to you, lest you say, “No bearer of glad tidings has come to us, nor any warner”; for now there has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a warner: since Allah has the power to will anything (5:17–19).

This *āyah* puts into focus the Christian belief as pertains to the meaning(s) of a God-son. Let us follow the meanings herewith.

“Certainly, the truth deny they who say, ‘Behold, God is the Christ, son of Mary.’” This *āyah* is from Allah (ﷻ) and it says the truth about any statement or description of Him. It is not pre-

sented to embarrass certain “Christians.” Nor is it meant to enter into a war of semantics with other “Christians,” nor to split hairs with yet more “Christians.” This is a declaration of truth from God Himself about Himself. And as simple as it gets, it is plainly saying that people who claim God is Christ are refusing the truth. They can embellish their statement with a “play on words” such as “God is a plurality of persons in one essence” or “God is one in essence, but three in persons.” But the fact of the matter is that the books and scholars they rely upon have no proof from God Himself of what they are saying. Their own scripture has been cut up, cut short, and cut out. God is not Jesus (ﷺ). This is what this preserved Scripture (the Qur’an) says. God did not enter into any type of incarnation, embodiment, or personification with Jesus (ﷺ).

To today’s average “Christian” whomever that may be, incarnation is the most central, but perhaps also the most complex, of all Christian hypotheses. It teaches that in Jesus Christ (ﷺ) the divine Logos or second person of the trinity assumed human form, that he was and is truly and fully human and truly and fully God, and that this “hypostatic union” (as it is called) will never cease.

This hypothesis, of course, took time to formulate. When the disciples first began to follow Jesus (ﷺ), they in all likelihood thought of him as no more than a charismatic prophet. Perhaps at some point they began to think of him as the promised prophet who would be like a new Moses (Deuteronomy, 18:15), then as the Messiah (Mark, 8:29), though still as a human messiah. But after the combined and converging interests of the Jewish priesthood and the Roman authority, new dimensions were added to the understanding of Jesus’ (ﷺ) person. The earliest belief it is said was adoptionist: Jesus (ﷺ) had been “...designated Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness” (Romans, 1:4), or “...God has made him both Lord and Christ” (Acts of the Apostles, 2:36). Moves toward a more definite view of the incarnation may be noted in St. Paul’s words that “To wit, that God was in Christ...” (2 Corinthians, 5:19) and in the Epistle to the Hebrews, “In many and various ways God spoke of old to our fathers by the prophets; but in these last days he has spoken to us by a Son...” (Hebrews, 1:1–2).

However, the full incarnation position is reached only in the late writings of the New Testament, especially in the famous words of the prologue to St. John's Gospel, "The Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John, 1:14). This already presupposes an understanding of God that permits the distinction between the father and the Word (or Logos). Notice the subtle language of the prologue, which asserts both distinction and identity, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God" (John, 1:1).

Some "reform" Christians may argue that the New Testament is very cautious of directly saying that Christ is God. But then other proponents of this view will go back to 2nd-century Christian writers like Ignatius who were candidly calling Christ God, and this does not seem to have caused them any discomfort or to have offended their monotheism.¹⁴⁶ The belief that man was also God is so offbeat — Soren Kierkegaard was later to call it the "absolute paradox" — that it was almost impossible not to stress one side at the expense of the other or to slide into sheer contradictions.¹⁴⁷ It is impossible here to give more than the barest outline of the confused controversies that went on over the meaning of the "incarnation of Jesus (✠)."

Some Christians reduced the divinity of Jesus (✠) to the point where he was simply an extraordinarily inspired human being (Ebionitism); others declared him a divine being whose humanity was only appearance (Docetism).¹⁴⁸ Many of the early Christian writers, according to a Christian appraisal of their own history, thought of Christ as a kind of second god, subordinate to the Father, and it was only after the Arian Controversy that the Council of Nicaea (325CE) declared Christ to be "one in being" of "one substance" (homoousios) with the Father.¹⁴⁹ Jesus' (✠) oneness with the Father having being settled through the European power's influence (the Council was convened by Constantine the Great who was the Roman emperor from 306–337CE), the next phase of the controversy concerned the relation of humanity and divinity within the person of Jesus (✠). Apollinaris (condemned in 281CE) thought of Christ as a hybrid being, partly human and

partly divine, but not fully either; Nestorius (condemned by the powers that be in 431CE) was alleged, perhaps wrongly, to have separated the divine and the human in Christ to the point of a double personality; Eutyches (condemned, again by the Euro-Church powers, in 431CE) was so opposed to Nestorius that he let the humanity of Christ be swallowed up in the single nature of his divinity, a view called Monophysitism and still held in the Coptic and other churches.¹⁵⁰ The Council of Chalcedon (451CE) tried to sort out the confusion by stating that in Jesus Christ (ﷺ) there are two natures, the human and the divine, each complete and entire; they are unmixed, yet they are not separated and concur together in one person.¹⁵¹

Though there were still some futile disputes over the question of whether Christ had one will or two wills, the Chalcedonian definition became the classic statement of the doctrine of incarnation and the touchstone of Christological orthodoxy. With various refinements, it persisted through the European Middle Ages and was adopted by the major Protestant churches at the time of the Reformation.¹⁵² Some would say that the Chalcedonian definition was not intended to be a final statement, but an attempt to focus on a more precise explanation of the incarnation of Jesus (ﷺ). It was meant to exclude certain procedures that had been found misleading and to establish a terminology drawn from the philosophical language prevailing at that time. In the past 200 years, however, the Chalcedonian formula has been called into question. Even those who believe in the “incarnation of Jesus (ﷺ)” in the sense of a genuine union of the human and divine in Christ, have in many cases come to ask whether Christians must look for new ways of expressing the matter.

No surprise to anyone, there are Christians who sharply criticize the Chalcedonian formula on logical grounds, holding that its key terms, *person* and *nature*, were ambiguous and had been used in an inconsistent way. Going from here, there are some who have proposed a radically new approach, beginning from the humanity of Jesus (ﷺ) and holding that as a belief, Christ represents the perfect or mature humanity, and that this includes a full God-conscious-

ness, which also declares to be a veritable indwelling of God in that person. So although this may reject the traditional formula, the new tendency is restating a doctrine of incarnation.

As Christian scholars moved more into a rational approach to the life of Jesus (✠), they began to see the flaws of Chalcedon. In point of fact, Martin Luther and other Protestants had raised similar objections in the 16th century, but they did not press them. There appear from time to time some learned Christians who are not comfortable with an “incarnation of humanity and divinity.”

Some Christian scholars have even criticized incarnational Christology as a Hellenizing of the gospel, which had the unfortunate result of putting the person of Christ at the center of the proclamation, rather than the kingdom of God as in Jesus’ (✠) original gospel. Were it not for the Church establishment, the Church hierarchy, and the corporate character of Church interests, many “free-thinking” Christians may have reverted to a pre-incarnational understanding of Jesus (✠).

Meanwhile there arose a different and more conservative trend to restate the meaning of the incarnation of Jesus (✠). A number of scholars, first in Germany and then in England, put forward *kenotic* theories. Appealing to the establishmentarian New Testament passage, which says of Christ that he “...but emptied himself, taking the form of a servant, being born in the likeness of men” (Philippians, 2:7), they claimed that incarnation of the divine in the human, the infinite in the finite, was made possible by a voluntary self-emptying (*kenosis*) in which the divine Logos laid aside those attributes that are incompatible with a truly human existence (for example, omniscience) while retaining others that are essential to a truly divine being (for example, perfect love). For some the theory was attractive, such as explaining the limitations of Christ’s knowledge. But, then, some critics felt that it was too speculative, and some saw in it a revival of the rejected views of Apollinaris.

All this being said, there seems to be a determination among theologians belonging to many schools of Christian “thought” within this mentally tortured approach to God that no doctrine of incarnation can be satisfactory if it obscures the full humanity of

Jesus Christ (ﷺ), hence the tendency to begin from an unambiguous assertion of the human reality. But it is also conceded that adoptionism tends to complete itself in some form of incarnationism, for there could be no ascent of the human to the divine without a descent of the divine into the human.

These are the types of assertions and hypotheses that characterize the attempts of rationalist Christians to delve into theological areas without sufficient information, which is to be found only in the unadulterated and complete Scripture (the Qur'an). This is something, unfortunately, that these Christians refuse to acknowledge as they are concerned less with searching for the truth than with promoting the New Testament, itself a product of Church councils and not the preserved word of God Himself.

It is very regrettable to have a permanent negative theological relationship between monotheistic Jews and incarnationalistic Christians. More unbecoming is their willful obstinacy to opening their minds to what this Qur'an is telling them about the attributes and the humanly understandable characteristics of Allah (ﷻ). God did not give man a mind to be tortured in trying to read and understand who He is. Humanity is blessed with this pristine Qur'an: unaltered, unchanged, and accessible to all. It is the prophetic and biblical agreement that God is one — without incarnation, without materializing into a human form, without a physical embodiment, without a mortal personification, and without a flesh and blood manifestation.

This theological misconception of Jesus being God and God being Jesus is simply wrong when anyone reads with an open mind this available Qur'an. Early Christians did not hold this type of faulty and improbable belief. The mass acceptance and adoption of Islam by hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of early Christians in and around the Holy Land occurred because they realized that Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an stand for a clear understanding of who Jesus (ﷺ) is, and who Allah (ﷻ) is,

Say, "And who could have prevailed with Allah in any way had it been His will to impair the Christ, son of

Mary, and his mother, and everyone who is on earth — all of them?” (5:17).

In effect, Muhammad (ﷺ) is being told to be circumspect with these speculators and hypothesizers who contrive their own assumptions and improvise their own conceptions about God, by extending their argument to its logical end: what will anyone be able to do if it is God’s will to ruin Jesus, his mother (ﷺ), and every human being on earth? Is there anyone or any combination of powers that will be able to deflect God’s will if He decrees the eradication of human life altogether? The question here infers that Jesus and his mother (ﷺ) are human beings like all other human beings who live on earth, thus subject to death and the termination of life.

And if Jesus (ﷺ) cannot avert death, and his mother cannot fend off death, then how can these be gods? The very mind that God has given man to understand Him is humiliated by its own false assumptions. Sometimes the mind itself, void of light from above, causes embarrassment to its very being; this is the case of those who after affirming Jesus (ﷺ) is God, turn around and affirm that Jesus (ﷺ) — that is, God — is crucified! The human mind in a wilderness of scriptural absence tries to justify this contradictory position by claiming that Jesus (ﷺ) has two natures, two wills, two persons, or two manifestations. And then they allocate to themselves the authority to rationalize the particular Jesus who was asking, “My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?” (Matthew, 27:46). Was this the human Jesus who was ignorant of the divine Jesus to be speaking in such a manner? This area opens up a Pandora’s box simply because the mind ventures into the domain of the divine without information from God Himself; and once that is done the human mind begins to fall into inaccuracies, contradictions, and unsustainable conclusions.

If man did not have any information on this subject from Allah (ﷻ) he would not be able to say one way or the other who Jesus (ﷺ) was or who God is. The fact of the matter is that people do have information on something that should never have been a bone of contention, and this information is right here in front of us;

this information has been upheld, maintained, and preserved exactly the way it was revealed by Allah (ﷻ) to Muhammad (ﷺ); and this information says that God is not Jesus and Jesus (ﷺ) is not God. This is the truth. This is the fact. And this is the final word on the matter.

Another way of dismissing all the mental clutter on this issue in the “Christian” or the Church context is to say the following:

1. the New Testament has been tampered with and not committed to writing as Jesus (ﷺ) himself communicated it;
2. the disciples and others after Jesus (ﷺ) tried to “reconstruct” the Gospel, and they themselves are not infallible; and
3. the Roman authorities had placed themselves inside “Christianity” and worked on flexing and bending the teachings of Jesus (ﷺ) to suit their own “interests.”

Hence, the narrative on the confusion of Jesus (ﷺ) with God and God with Jesus (ﷺ) has to be dismissed in light of this meticulously preserved Qur’an, and the infallibility of Muhammad (ﷺ) as he explained this issue, as well as the credence given to this scriptural fact by the “conversion” of hundreds of thousands (if not millions) of early Christians to Islam.

The theological Church reduction of monotheism to a definition saying that Christ had only one will is a gross violation of the actual, essential, elementary, and self-evident scriptural and prophetically reinstated revelations throughout time that God is one, without a derivative, and has no parallel. The Chalcedon statement that Christ had divine and human natures did not settle the internally agitated controversy among the thought leaders of a theologically ambulatory church under the influence of Roman and Byzantine officialdom. Monophysitism, a belief that Christ had only one nature (divine), embroiled the East in schisms.¹⁵³ Nevertheless, monotheism — purely and simply, a belief in one God — remains embroiled in a web of mental zigzags within a Christianity confined by Church definitions. Due to Church abandonment of scripture and service to the powers of the status quo, a concept as straightforward as monotheism has been made unnecessarily com-

plicated with many variations. Some Christians will say that there is but one God who created and continues to sustain the world. History continues to reveal this creative will, and the ethical viewpoint of human beings arises from God who is holy. They will go further in this line of reasoning, saying that insofar as human beings are concerned, Judaism, Christianity, and Islam view God as belonging to the domain of man's "personal" edification.

On further probing, they will say Judaism and Islam strictly affirm that God is one. This is spelled out in the Shema, "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord..." (Deuteronomy, 6:4). They will also say that the Qur'an emphatically contradicts the Christian assertion about the Holy Trinity. Then comes the philosophical plunge into irreconcilable suppositions and conjecture, with Christianity viewing God as being one, but having three persons or aspects. This is followed up by a version of history that speaks, during the first few centuries of the Christian era, of theologians writing voluminously in explication of this "basic affirmation." The Nicene Creed, according to them, was the Church's official statement to explain the relationship between the first two "Persons of the Godhead." From here on, the human mind lends itself to imagination.

And so, for instance, pantheism says that God is in all creation, in contradistinction to the idea that God created but is separate from His creation. Pantheism, usually connected with the thought of such individuals as Pierre Teilhard de Chardin, when amalgamated with classical monotheism, says that God is completely present in the world but has individual being apart from the world.¹⁵⁴ Some religions, including Hinduism, have affirmed that God is one but has many names. Henotheism is the belief that there are many gods, but that a particular people worship and give allegiance to one God while recognizing that other peoples act similarly in worshiping another deity. This is also referred to as *monolatry*. Thus, now that the whole idea of God's oneness and unity is lost, what emerges is a "monotheistic" plurality that may be described as God having multiple forms, not simply many names or several aspects. An ancient version of this approach to God may be

found in the belief of preliterate peoples in one high God who is beyond their lesser gods in power.

In the matter of the existence of evil, monotheism must deal with the problem of *theodicy* — a vindication of the divine attributes, particularly holiness and justice, in establishing or allowing the existence of physical and moral evil. Zoroastrianism attempted to solve such a problem with a dualistic approach that personified evil as a force constantly at war with the good.¹⁵⁵ This theme entered Christianity through Manichaeism with the assertion that the god who created the world was evil, but was superseded by the God and Father of Jesus Christ.¹⁵⁶ This view was rejected by the Church.

Setting aside this play on words, the bottom line is that the mental knot, tightened by Church teachings throughout “Christian” history, especially after the popularity of Islam, is the deification of Jesus (ﷺ). All major Christian sects and religions (Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant) say that God is Christ, the son of Mary (ﷺ), in one form or another, or in different words and phrases.

The Qur’an, Allah’s (ﷻ) confirmed and constant words, vigorously dispels this allegation, saying it is tantamount to *kufr* (God-denial). Muslims, if and when they are to speak about this issue, are instructed in these *āyāt* to tell the advocates of this position, **“But then who has the capacity to stop God from demolishing Jesus, Mary, and all other human beings on earth if that is His will?”** Of course no one can. Allah (ﷻ) is able to eradicate everyone and anyone without any exceptions if that is what He wants to do. No other mortal being has any authority over God; hence, there are no other gods, and there is no one who in essence is sharing His divinity. And if Jesus (ﷺ) is unable to ward off God’s will pertaining to himself and his mother, how can he be a god, a deity, or a divinity? Church-defined Christians have to come to terms with this fact of scripture, revelation, and prophetic consistencies predating Jesus (ﷺ) and postdating him.

The theological and philosophical Church discourse starts with the creation of Adam (ﷺ), his committing the “original sin,” and how this sinful first human being gets caught between God’s justice that demands punishment and God’s compassion that

demands amnesty. From this point, it moves on to how “God” is in a contradiction that can only be solved by breeding a “god” in the womb of a mortal mother who will give birth to a human-god or a deified human. Continuing on with this line of “reasoning,” the divine human will live a sinless life, and then be put through an awful death on a cross to finally redeem humanity and absolve God the Father of the justice/compassion contradiction. This may fire up the imagination but it has neither any scriptural support, nor historical centrality. If such was the case, the whole narrative of scripture from Noah to Abraham to Moses to Jesus to Muhammad (ﷺ) would have featured this essential and all-important drama as the centerpiece of revelation and scripture. Obviously this is not the case; and therefore this theological and historical Church construct is baseless and unsubstantiated.

Presenting it in this manner is not meant to injure the feelings of those who fervently believe the Church doctrine; rather it is advanced with the full conviction of the truth and validity of the Qur’an in pointing to an untruth, a false statement, and an erroneous belief that says Jesus is God and God is Jesus (ﷺ). Humanity is not going to be redeemed by an “automatic” belief in this type of theology. Humanity is not going to be saved by the malfunction of its God-given mind. And humanity is not going to find a fondness in this Church imposed interpretation of who is divine and who is human when both of them become indistinguishable in the person of Jesus (ﷺ). Besides, there are other human beings — innocent children, pregnant mothers, victims of wars, poverty devoured populations, survival level societies, malnourished adolescents, disease ravaged masses, etc. — who are being put to a slow death, often as painful as a crucifixion. Should they not be redeemed for the pain they bear? Or do such questions devolve into a mental trap of “double standards”? The Church has to outgrow this concoction of invalid inferences and speculations about Jesus (ﷺ).

Jesus (ﷺ) did perform miracles. The miracles he did were extraordinary and exceptional. But such performance does not make him a deity. The Qur’an, Allah’s (ﷻ) incontrovertible words, anticipated and countered what has become a millennium of theo-

logical Church argumentation about the miracles of Jesus (ﷺ) as “proof” of his divine nature saying,

For, Allah’s is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them; He creates what He wills: and Allah has the power to will anything! (5:17).

True, the birth of Jesus (ﷺ) was supernatural. He performed supernatural acts — things that are not associated with an average human being, or even an above average human being. But then, again, “**He [God] creates what He wills.**” Jesus (ﷺ), as exceptional as he was, is not in control of the heavens and the earth. It is Allah (ﷻ) who creates as an expression of His will. He may create life out of the peculiarity of feminine and masculine affinities. He may create a human being without a father, without a mother, or without both. The first human being was created without a biological father and mother. The second human being was created without one or the other. And Jesus (ﷺ) was created without a father. The first human being who was created without parents does not mean that he or she was a god. Creating life in unusual ways, in defiance of the norm, does not mean that the newly born is a god.

And just because some human beings are distinguished from others does not mean they have a share of divinity that others do not have. Jesus (ﷺ) effected miracles, causing amazing and wonderful things to happen. These things happened with the endorsement and license of Allah (ﷻ). There may be distinguished artists and scientists who also are differentiated from other human beings; but that does not mean that they are sharing in the “Godhead.” Planet earth stands out in comparison to other planets because of life on it. Life is the will of Allah (ﷻ), no doubt, but that does not make planet earth a divine planet or a planet that shares in the divinity of God.

Biblical history, prior to Church Councils and pronouncements, affirmed the oneness of God in contradistinction to prevailing pagan deities and oppressive authorities. Why should the Church part with scriptural history, biblical Prophets (ﷺ), and this

irrefutable Qur'an, thereby interposing a deified Jesus into the unsubdivided, uncomplicated, and unproblematic unity and oneness of God? It is pagan tradition, pagan culture, and pagan history that deifies the abnormal, imparts godlike qualities to the extraordinary, and winds up with multiple divinities and numerous idols. Why has the official version of Church theology taken this tangent and deviated away from the monotheism and the singularity of God's essence, nature, and "composition," all the while knowing that **"God has the power to will anything"**? If the teachings of the Church are humble in essence, these teachings should offer Christian scholars and sages the humility to affirm the truth when it comes to them, as it has here in this unfailing Book of Allah (ﷻ), the perfect and positive Qur'an.

The larger picture in the practical world away from the labyrinth of theological fine arguments and elaborate pontificating is the fact that Jesus in the tradition of the biblical Prophets (ﷺ) came to teach and advance the central theme of scripture, which is the Oneness of God (*tawhīd*) — the Oneness of His divinity, the Oneness of His authority, the Oneness of His self, and the Oneness of His nature. Given that this reality is almost unrecognizable in our world today, this means that it is given to pagan practices, idolatrous ideologies, and official oppression. People, in as much as they need a savior, are subject to the mainstreaming of governments and the weight of traditions and cultures. Jesus (ﷺ) found himself under tremendous pressure from those who had corrupted biblical teachings and those who were abusing official powers. His exit from these diabolical forces is a miracle that will be discussed in the *tafsīr* of future *āyāt*. But as history would have it, the generations that sought to follow Jesus (ﷺ) after he was raised by Allah (ﷻ) were also subject to religious obscurantism and governmental persecution. The intrusion of men, coming into "Christianity" from these two inimical sources, would later shape the theological and "practical" character of the Church. In this tragic turn of events there were narratives of Jesus (ﷺ) that did not survive, there were gospels that were not acknowledged, and there were people who were persecuted and oppressed lest they speak the truth about Jesus

(ﷺ) and his mission. The Church still does not demonstrate any obligation to stand up for the issues of justice. This can only come about when the Church acknowledges the authority of Allah (ﷻ), an authority that does not tolerate secular governments and enslavement political programs enhanced by the only holy trinity that matters: the military establishment, the industrial complex, and the financial empire.

God's "Children" Is a Cover for Racism and Elitism

And [both] the Jews and the Christians say, "We are God's children, and His beloved ones." Say, "Why, then, does He cause you to suffer for your sins? No, you are but human beings of His creating. He forgives whom He wills, and He causes to suffer whom He wills: for Allah's is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and with Him is all journeys' end" (5:18).

The *tafsir* literature recounts an occasion when certain adherents of the Bible (Ibn Abī, Baḥrī ibn 'Amr, Nu'mān ibn Qaṣayy, and Shās ibn 'Adī) came to Muhammad (ﷺ) to listen to him explain how they should receive Allah (ﷻ) and approach Him, and how they ought to do all they could to avoid His wrath and ire. After listening, these followers of earlier scripture said, "Are you trying to scare us, O Muhammad? By God, we are God's children and His loved ones."¹⁵⁷

As if to underscore this prevalent attitude and this superiority complex among some Christians and Jews, the eternal words came to expose this aberration, "And [both] the Jews and the Christians say, 'We are God's children, and His beloved ones.'" A cursory look through biblical literature shows that Adam (ﷺ) is called "the son of God" (Luke, 3:38), as were Jacob and David (Exodus, 4:22–23; Psalms, 89:26–27). Jesus (ﷺ) is also referred to as "son of God." There is a general reference to angels and righteous people as

being “God’s children.” These designations are numerous in the New Testament,

Blessed are the peacemakers, for they shall be called the children of God... (Matthew, 5:9);

For all who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God (Romans, 8:14);

The people said to Jesus, “Abraham is our father!” Jesus replied, “If you were Abraham’s children, you would do what Abraham did. Instead, you want to kill me for telling you the truth that God gave me. Abraham never did anything like that. But you are doing exactly what your father does.”

“Don’t accuse us of having someone else as our father!” they said. “We just have one father, and he is God.” Jesus answered, “If God were your Father, you would love me, because I came from God and only from Him. He sent me. I did not come on my own. Why can’t you understand what I am talking about? Can’t you stand to hear what I am saying? Your father is the devil, and you do exactly what he wants. He has always been a murderer and a liar. There is nothing truthful about him. He speaks on his own, and everything he says is a lie. Not only is he a liar himself, but he is also the father of all lies.

“Everything I have told you is true, and you still refuse to have faith in me. Can any of you accuse me of sin? If you cannot, why won’t you have faith in me? After all, I am telling you the truth. Anyone who belongs to God will listen to his message. But you refuse to listen, because you don’t belong to God.” (John, 8:39–47).

The usage of the words *son* and *father* above does not refer to a biological or physiological relationship, but to a spiritual and moral relationship. The Church, though, wanted to be selective, so it talks

about an incarnated and hence a physical son of God, Jesus (ﷺ), and then renders all other references to have a metaphysical meaning.

The political and ideological twist that comes out of the Jewish and Christian religious claim to be God's children and lovable ones is an undeniably intense streak of elitism, nationalism, and racism. Euro-American colonialism and imperialism have demonstrated from their crusading wars against the "infidels" in the Holy Lands to their subjugation and enslavement of two continents (Asia and Africa) for hundreds of years their supremacy role toward the lesser peoples of the world. Apartheid and Zionism stand out as the most blatant and brutal expressions of that unspeakable pathology that feeds on distorted religious texts to rationalize bloody military campaigns — all in the name of God.

To jolt these Jews and Christians out of their fantasies of having a family relationship with God to the exclusion of other races, ethnic groups, and peoples, the *āyah* quickly implores the committed Muslims to say, **"Why then does Allah cause you to suffer for your sins? No, you are but human beings of His creating. He forgives whom He wills, and He causes to suffer whom He wills..."** These self-promoting Jews and Christians need not look far; their own history betrays the courses and obstacles of agony, woe, distress, and torture they had to endure. Their common heritage is full of it. Even their condition today bespeaks the endemic psychological and physical pain they have had to weather because of their breakaway attitude with God. The "runaway Jews" way back then had to suffer the pagans taking over their Temple. This harrowing chapter in their history is certainly not due to them being God's children. An ancient, historic, and enduring exile and diaspora of fugitives from scripture has not been the share of "Jews" because they are God's children, His chosen race, and His blue-eyed ones. How dare Zionist Jews brandish this broad claim when their uncontrollable behavior with God has caused them to be virtually homeless. In more direct words, "If you are not at home with God, you will have no home."

Church-defined Christians have not fared much better. These church-going Christians have brought the world to the brink of all-out ruin many times in the past, and now they are toying with

nuclear weapons and post-nuclear weapons that can virtually detonate the galaxy. These Christian products of a church running amok from God have the dubious distinction of drawing the world for the first time into “world wars.” If God is their father, then this is not what a father permits his children to do. If God is their dearest, then this is not what He should be decreeing for them. Therefore, they are not God’s children and darlings; they are people just like all other people on earth who are created by God and subject to His justice and mercy. God is not going to show them any favoritism; He is just and will have His laws applied, and He is merciful and will include in His mercy those who work for it, not those who fantasize about it. However they choose to define themselves, it is the works and labor of Jews and Christians that will determine God’s relationship with them, equivalent to how these works determine His relationship with all peoples. With the world on a confrontational precipice of their making, they would do well to shed their false pretenses, throw away their trumped-up claims, and deflate their puffed-up egos. Their elaborate discourse on being God’s family and kinship group amounts to hogwash. Allah’s (ﷻ) words are telling us to begin from a point of common humanity and stand on the grounds of equality, at least as far as our physical selves are concerned.

The racist and elitist psychology has the effect, after a while, of leading people to believe that they “have it all.” To bring these wishful thinkers back to reality Allah (ﷻ) says, “**...for Allah’s is the dominion over the heavens and the earth and all that is between them, and with Him is all journeys’ end.**” Lest this false pride get to them, they are reminded that everything from planets to plants belongs to Allah (ﷻ); and He says everyone will finish his worldly journey by winding up in the presence of Allah (ﷻ). This *āyah* is telling those who would misrepresent and twist scripture to never attempt to “sneak up” on God by claiming that He is theirs, that they are His, and that by so doing, they can carry on in world affairs as if there is no presence for God’s justice. They should take note that Allah (ﷻ) is versed on everything and is fair about everything. It is He who is the Creator, the Proprietor, the Sustainer, and the absolute Controller. Everyone else who has a mind and

a conscience — humans, jinn, and angels — is His subordinate, not His daughters and sons, **“But everyone in the heavens and earth shall approach the Most Merciful as a subordinate” (19:93).**

“And to Him is [our] turnabout.” The inference here is that people who spend their time in this world feeding on their own self-righteous and self-centered propaganda will wind up with Allah (ﷻ) to face the consequences of their worldly pretensions. At the end of the worldly day these people with prejudiced beliefs will bear the burden and suffer the effects of their God-denial, the results of their arrogance, and the outcome of their religiously coated bigotry.

Some people may hasten to say that Muslims also stand to suffer in this world and in the world to come. And that is fitting, with an explanation. True, Muhammad (ﷺ) and those nearest to him did, in fact, suffer at Uḥud, during the long and trying years in Makkah; and so did his beloved grandsons, al-Ḥasan and al-Ḥusayn. For all that, they suffered not because they transgressed against the pledge they took with Allah (ﷻ), but because they were engaged in battle against those who failed to affirm Him. We do affirm that a form of suffering was a part of their lives, while we fervently believe they are beloved to Allah (ﷻ). The difference is that though we hold Muhammad (ﷺ) and his close companions to be esteemed and dear to Allah (ﷻ), we never say they are God’s children, or the “family of God,” or anything approaching such statements that give credence to an extrapolated prejudice, racism, and segregation attitude.

Another element that is present within the Yahūdī psychology and absent within the Islamic one is the damning consequence that accrues to bragging about being “God’s special people” when in the real world this recalcitrant mindset has abandoned God, His covenant, and His commandments. Subsequently the Yahūd incurred, because of this polarized contradiction, the penalty of *maskh* — an expedited worldly penalty of genetic regression that resulted in some of them “lapsing” into a sub-human species. This means that all Yahūdī and “evangelical” claims to be exempt from God’s corrective action in this world are unfounded and contrary to historical facts and current events.

The strung-out and chronic problem of prejudice, discrimination, segregation, and racism is found in the Yahūdī context. These Zionist Jews are convinced they are original, special, and exceptional in their relationship with God and in God's relationship with them. From their peculiar religious viewpoint all other peoples are inferior and substandard. They imperiously project a supernormal status in the relationship they have with God; therefore, they believe and hold as a truism that all other peoples are inferior to them, even if these others are honored by scripture, dignified by prophets, and earn their merit by sacrifice and hard work, thereby living up to their covenant with Allah (ﷻ). This religious dogma nurtures a psychological supremacy that spawns its own mentality. Once this is worked out through the pronouncements of Zionist sages and the interpretations of Talmudic texts, what "materializes" is a nation of people that cannot believe in the equality of man, the coexistence of different societies, and the normal interaction of human beings. This overbearing pride and presumption with its "religious foundations" makes it impossible for the average "Jew" to consider the "other's" scripture, relationship with God, and history.

From this standpoint, it was impossible for them to mortify their collective ego so as to foster the fertile and unencumbered posture that could consider what Muhammad (ﷺ) and this Qur'an were saying. Moreover, their internal mind told them that Muhammad (ﷺ) was an Arab and not an Israeli. In their mind an Israeli is superior and an Arab is inferior; so how can a superior follow an inferior? Their mental structure could not permit this to happen. So, because of this attitude, these Israelis in race and Zionists in religion thought they were not going to be taken to task by God when they turned away from Muhammad (ﷺ), turned down the Qur'an, and finally turned their back on Islam. And so, thinking themselves to be God's prodigious and proper people, how could it be possible for God to treat them as anything but His children and holy people (as if children should not be disciplined)? This is the self-aggrandizement that compelled the prophets who were involved in the history of Banū Isrā'īl to struggle against their self-love, self-importance, and social ego.

Not dissimilar is the “Christian” counterpart to this Yahūdi consciousness of ego-ideology. They lean on a God-son relationship to claim that the Messiah has saved them by sacrificing himself. The new spirit out of this fantastic interpretation of events is that they are “reborn.” In this new take on a “bloodline” to God, mankind is presented with God having a “real son.” And in this devised narrative God is a father. At the time this Qur’an was revealed, these types of “Christians” had power, and they had the means to cause more corruption, spread more mischief, inflict more injury, and show more resistance than did the “Jews” of Arabia. And like their Jewish predecessors, they persisted in postulating they are God’s children and cherished ones. This display of a sense of being better than others made them feel they are in no need of improving their understanding of scripture and correcting their irregularities. The Church heads thought of themselves, and still do, to be perfect and infallible. To them, a prophet out of Arabia stood no chance of contributing to scriptural purity and morality. They, too, were not prepared to consider what this Qur’an and Islam were all about, and what the oneness of God meant.

The more the years would pass on, the more entrenched they became in their ego fortifications. This is what the Qur’an, Allah’s (ﷻ) words, means when the *āyah* says, **“And [both] the Jews and the Christians say, ‘We are God’s children, and His favored ones.’”** They got their answer. They are told there is nothing intrinsically special about them. There is nothing that, in and of itself, makes them preferable to all the other peoples, tribes, and bloodlines that Allah (ﷻ) also created. There is nothing in the way they are created that places them above other people because of the way these others are created. In other words, they are just like everyone else in their physical and bodily beings. Insofar as their biology is concerned, God looks at all created human beings as equals. Therefore, if a people find themselves “under penalty pressure” in this world it is because of what they did and not because of how they were created.

Even with this dismissive attitude toward those “others,” they should take stock of the fact that God will express His mercy before

applying His justice. But in this divine dynamic, they should also remember that God's social laws (*sunan*) are equally applied to all people — who are judged by their labor and efforts and not by their genes and colors. God's knowledge is infinite, His justice is broad, and His wisdom is authentic. If people know all this, with scripture being virtually ubiquitous today, then how can some say they are "chosen," "special," or they alone are His in exclusion to the sacrifices, suffering, and histories of other peoples? The inevitable reply to their unfaithful assumptions is that they, just like everyone else, are subject to God's penalties and pain in this world, if they have reaped it. They should have no doubt about this, if due to nothing else than to their own history and their idiosyncratic, egocentric psyches. The nature of God's punishment upon them comes from the nature of their estrangement from Him. This is a social law, a historical pattern, and a forgone conclusion.¹⁵⁸

We Muslims should be the first to concede this scriptural fact. Muhammad (ﷺ), as far as we know, never placed a blanket of automatic protection on the Muslims inoculating them from what they do in this world and from what awaits them in the world to approach. Many of those who consider themselves Muslims are subject to Allah's (ﷻ) *sunan*, just like everyone else. Even the finest generation of Muslims around the Prophet (ﷺ), during the clash at Uḥud, did not win because within them there were dual-loyalists and nominal Muslims. We Muslims should learn that what happened to us at Uḥud, even though the Prophet (ﷺ) himself was there, occurred because some of us brought to this front of ultimate sacrifice a psychology that preferred material acquisition to Allah's (ﷻ) satisfaction. There were among us snipers, sharpshooters, and archers who disobeyed a clear order from their commander-in-chief. They showed how anxious they were to collect the spoils of war — so anxious that they began to scuffle among themselves as to what to do next. We must also attune ourselves to the resolve that when we commit these types of mistakes for which we may pay dearly, we will go on to correct ourselves and press on with our higher responsibilities, showing more dedication and more sincerity.

ty the next time we are called upon to sacrifice life and limb for Allah (ﷻ). We must learn, where Jews and Christians failed to learn, that Allah's (ﷻ) social laws do not discriminate; they apply to everyone — His most ardent adherents included. Learning from our psychological interaction with Allah (ﷻ) and the social laws of His that ensue, we begin to understand that we earn our status — we do not inherit it.

In the flagship lesson about Uḥud, the words of the Qur'an are bolts of lightning in our souls. Listen to what Allah (ﷻ) says,

You [the committed Muslims] have been preceded by [Allah's] social laws (*sunan*). Mobilize yourselves throughout the world and observe the consequences of those who defraud [Allah]. This is a proclamation to people and a guidance and a word of advice for those on guard [toward Allah]. Do not lose momentum, do not grieve while you are in prominent positions and committed to Allah. If you are stroked by trauma, they [your opponents] are also stroked by similar trauma; for it is by epochs [of fortune and misfortune] We decree to go around among people: and [this], for Allah to ascertain those of you who are [truly] committed [to Him] and to elect witnesses [for Him] from among you — since Allah does not favor oppressors. [It is in this way that] Allah verifies those who are committed [to Him] and He obliterates those who deny Him (3:137–141).

Then, as the *āyāt* assess the outcome of Uḥud,

Allah fulfilled His guarantee to you as you, per His sanction, were driving them [the Makkan *mushriks*] back, until you showed a failure [of cohesion] and began to feud among yourselves concerning your [military] affair and you disobeyed after [Allah] brought you within view of that which you were longing...(3:152).

The lesson is finally realized when Allah (ﷻ) told the entire body of Muslims, who were only now learning that there is nothing special about them when it comes to Allah's (ﷻ) *sunan*,

And do you, now that a [military] calamity has befallen you after you had inflicted twice as much [on your foes], ask yourselves, "How has this come about?" Say, "It has come from your own selves" (3:165).

These *āyāt* spell it out for Muslims and for all humanity: Allah's (ﷻ) laws do not take sides. People are going to harvest the end results of what they do. There is no title and no name recognition that is going to interfere with His assured codes and social laws (*sunan*). No religious community, no higher culture, no continental empire, no advanced civilization, and no militaristic superpower has ever been exempt from these *sunan*. The difference between people who listen to and obey God on the one hand and those who abandon Him on the other is that the former are conscious and observant of these *sunan*, while the latter are not. Even with those who are aware of and attentive to these *sunan*, there may be aberrational moments of failure or days of reversal, but these only help to build a greater determination for better performance. Far afield from these qualities of commitment are the rogue eccentricities of those who mentally reject Allah's (ﷻ) social laws (though they cannot avoid the consequences of their choice): casting allegations and demonstrating a religious intolerance that spawns dogmatism and bigotry. The psychological seeds of religious exclusivism and politics based on bigotry beget strategies of oppression, plans for aggression, and maps of occupation. The best presentation of this fact is the Zionist State of Israel today. The more the religion-based Zionists continue to pursue their highhanded close-mindedness, the more they engender divisions, arrogance, and instability among themselves and, for a time, among their victims.

People who bond with Allah (ﷻ) regard the setbacks of life, as painful as they may be, to be educational and inspirational. They learn from their mistakes and they correct their faults. People who

bond with Allah (ﷻ) may at times have bitter pills to swallow, but those who detach from Allah (ﷻ) altogether are condemned to feel the lashes of pain in their temporal lives.

Still, with all this knowledge and insight, some Muslims have not learned the significance of Uḥud; they prefer to appropriate the ways of these “Jews” and “Christians.” Nothing can be more humiliating than watching today’s Muslims as they try to outdo one another in copycatting diminished Christians and imitating dogmatic Jews. Some Muslims camouflage themselves with Islamic rituals while following an imperialist and Zionist agenda. In the Judeo-Christian culture, there have been people who parted with its core covenant content and consequently acquired their secular character; and hence free of the “religious” shackles they had imposed on themselves, they ventured out into the world and began to discover, investigate, and research social laws. Upon employing whatever limited understanding they could achieve of these laws into their policies and societal regulations, thereby effecting changes in the nature of their communal lives, they acknowledged and prized their breakthroughs. The most recent upheavals these types had to endure was the collapse of communism and the seizures of socialism. The point is that while this entire worldwide phenomenon was folding up in front of a billion and a half Muslims, there were no deep thoughts — Qur’anic thoughts — on why and how all this was happening. Objectively speaking there has been, in a sense, an interchange of positions between those who were ignorant of Allah’s (ﷻ) *sunan* and those who are supposed to be aware of them.

Muhammad (ﷺ) Is the Apostle They Were Anticipating

O followers of the Bible! Now, after a long time during which no apostles have appeared, there has come to you [this] Our Apostle to make [the truth] clear to you, lest you say, “No bearer of good news has come to us, nor any warner”; for now there has come to you a bearer of good news and a warner — since Allah has the power to will anything (5:19).

This means that long before the advent of this prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ), both the Jews and Christians were awaiting his commission as foretold in the scripture sent to them by God. And then, it finally happened. The Jews were told by God through Moses (ﷺ) that a prophet will appear from the children of Ishmael (ﷺ), their relatives — and this turned out to be Muhammad (ﷺ). In the Gospel, the words of Jesus (ﷺ) foretell of the coming of the Paraclete who will teach them everything — again, referring to Muhammad (ﷺ). These prophecies are to be found in scripture before it was obfuscated by these People of the Book.

They were searching for this anticipated prophet. On one occasion, according to the last of the canonical Gospel writers, Jewish priests and Levites approached John the Baptist (Yahyá – ﷺ) and the following occurred,

Now this was John’s [the Baptist] testimony when the Jewish leaders in Jerusalem sent priests and Levites to ask him who he was. He did not fail to confess, but confessed freely, “I am not the Messiah.” They asked him, “Then who are you? Are you Elijah?” He said, “I am not.” “Are you the Prophet?” He answered, “No.” (John, 1:19–21, New International Version).

Most puzzling is that once the apostle they were looking for actually came, they all pretended to be disinterested. Is it because Muhammad (ﷺ) was an Arab apostle who did not come from their

“approved” line of Israeli descent? Is it because he did not belong to the mainstream or the dominant scriptural, religious culture of that day — *al-nabi al-ummi*? After a lull in scriptural and prophetic activity, he was there to show them all they needed to know about revelation, scriptural evidence, and the knowledge that would enhance their worldly well-being. This was their chance to ascertain and then drive away the pagan beliefs that had infected their understanding of the Old and New Testaments. Muhammad (ﷺ) is still accessible to them and hence they can yet learn from him the ascetic values they had evacuated for a materialistic life on the one hand, or the value of social correction they had shrunk away from for a hermetic lifestyle on the other. Regardless of their patronizing attitude toward him, Muhammad (ﷺ) offers a wealth of knowledge and insight, which he himself received from the Almighty, “...to make the truth clear to you.” He also came to publicize anew portions of scripture they had concealed. Had he not been a prophet from Allah (ﷻ) he would not have been able to bring with him all this information, aspects of which were already familiar to their rabbis, priests, wise men, and leaders.

With the advent of Muhammad (ﷺ), they cannot have any more excuses to say on the Day of Accountability that there was no prophet sent to them in the latter days, “...lest you say, ‘no bearer of glad tidings has come to us, nor any warner.’” This Prophet (ﷺ) gave it to them as it is, without any surreptitious human detractions, abridgements, or revisions — a full and self-evident scripture that informs all who bind tightly to Allah (ﷻ) of their bliss in heaven, and all who pull apart from Him of their terrifying fate in the pending life, “...for now there has come to you a bearer of glad tidings and a warner.” That is Muhammad (ﷺ). He set the record straight on redemption, salvation, and eternal life — a record that is not informed by their wishful thinking or improvised ideas about race, a chosen people, and a son of God. For any kind of social and strategic cohesion to take place among people of scripture so that they can jointly address the problems tearing up civil society, any notions of human superiority of one man over another that are perceived to have divine sanction must be excised from the

human consciousness, or at least from that of scriptural adherents. Redemption, the act of deliverance from sin, has nothing to do with a bloodline between God and a son or between God and a chosen race. It is contingent upon doing what is right out of a personal commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and a social covenant with Him. Allah (ﷻ) is not going to show favoritism toward anyone. He says as much,

It is not in accordance with your wishful thinking [the Muslims] nor the wishful thinking of scriptural folks [Jews and Christians], [rather] whoever does what is wrong shall bear the [negative] consequence, and he will not find short of Allah anyone [of authority] to revert to nor anyone [of power] to support him. And whoever does what is right, be it a male or female, while committed to Allah, it is he who will enter Paradise having not been wronged in the least (4:123–124).

With all these crystal clear *āyāt*, some of them still continued to sequester Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an from public opinion. Their prophets spoke Hebrew and Aramaic, and hence the Old and New Testaments could not have been revealed in the Greek or Latin languages. Yet, through the medium of translation and through the institution of church and clergy, they were able to subvert the biblical words of prophecy. When reference is made in the Gospel to the coming of Muhammad (ﷺ), they use their own word, *Paraclete*, to deflect from this fact. The Greek word, *parakletos*, belongs to the domain of court and law, and is variously rendered as *counsel for the defense*, *advocate*, or *intercessor*. A perusal of the Bible discloses that the word belongs primarily to the vocabulary of the Fourth Gospel,

And I will pray the Father, and he will give you another Counselor [the Paraclete], to be with you for ever, (John, 14:16);

But the Counselor [Paraclete], the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, he will teach you all things, and bring to your remembrance all that I have said to you (John, 14:26);

But when the Counselor [Paraclete] comes, whom I shall send to you from the Father, even the Spirit of truth, who proceeds from the Father, he will bear witness to me (John, 15:26);

Nevertheless I tell you the truth: it is to your advantage that I go away, for if I do not go away, the Counselor [Paraclete] will not come to you; but if I go, I will send him to you (John, 16:7);

with the only remaining reference being found in the New Testament Book of 1 John,

My little children, I am writing this to you so that you may not sin; but if any one does sin, we have an advocate [Paraclete] with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous; (1 John, 2:1).

According to Europeanized Christianity, there are two specific uses of the term. Firstly, in the Book of 1 John, Jesus Christ (ﷺ) is given this title as the one who represents the church in the heavenly court as its advocate, a theme elaborated in the intercessory prayer recorded in John, 17:1–26. Christian apologia goes on to say that the same title is known by inference from John, 14:16, where Jesus (ﷺ) is clearly both claiming to be the disciples' helper and promising to give them "another Counselor"; here they interject their own interpretation, saying that the "other Counselor" is the Holy Spirit. Secondly, the balance of the New Testament texts that use the term *parakletos* refer to the ministry of the Spirit — a spirit who fulfills a manifold function as Christ's agent in the church and the world. Per their elaboration, specifically the Spirit leads into

truth, exposing human folly and need, and strengthens believers in times of testing. Some of them even say that the Paraclete acts as Christ's alter ego, making up for the absence of the exalted Lord by becoming to the church, after the Ascension, all that the historical Jesus (ﷺ) had been to the disciples while he was on earth.

In this way in one fell swoop, they render their own Christian populations oblivious to the coming of Muhammad (ﷺ), which was prophesied in the Bible. It is not the poor Christian masses who are guilty of this serious breach of faith; rather, it is the initial founders of the church who shall bear the brunt of this grave omission.

In one of the encounters between the Prophet (ﷺ) and the Yahūdī community of Madinah, the former was explaining some of the meanings of Islam with all the advantages that accrue to being a subject of God and all the disadvantages that follow from being a subject of anyone or anything else. After listening, these Yahūdīs gave the impression they were not convinced. At this point, a few committed Muslims — Mu'ādh ibn Jabal, Sa'd ibn 'Ubādaḥ, and 'Uqbaḥ ibn Wahb — responded to these deceitful Yahūdīs,

O Yahūdī folks! Be conscious of Allah's (ﷻ) power presence in human affairs! We swear by Allah (ﷻ) that you do, in fact, know that he [Muhammad] is Allah's Apostle (ﷺ). You yourselves were telling us about him before his advent. You even described him for us — and he fulfils your own descriptions.

Then two Yahūdīs, Rāfi' ibn Ḥuraymaḥ and Wahb ibn Yahūdā, countered with, "We never said such things to you. Never did God reveal a scripture after Moses, and never did He send a person with glad tidings or bad news after Moses." Due to this inter-communal exchange, this *āyah* was revealed to expose people who do not tell the truth while covering up the God-given information that was (and may still be) in their possession.¹⁵⁹ Of note here is that the Prophet (ﷺ), fully aware of who the Yahūd are, did not refuse to meet with them. He presented them with the truth and the facts, as prophets should have no recriminations about doing, but they

were the ones, because of their acquisitive attitude to scripture and prophethood, who took a reactionary position to the weight of the truth and the clarity of the facts.

Banū Isrā'il: the Enduring “Class” of Covenant Crashers

And, bear in mind Moses who said to his people, “O my people! Remember the blessings that Allah bestowed upon you when he raised up prophets among you, and made you masters [of your own destiny], and granted you [favours] such as He had not granted to anyone else in the world. O my people! Enter the holy land that Allah has promised you — but do not turn back [on your commitment], for then you will be lost!”

They answered, “O Moses! Behold, fierce people dwell in that land, and we will surely not enter it unless they depart therefrom; but if they depart therefrom, then, behold, we will enter it.”

[Whereupon] two men from among those who feared [Allah, and] whom Allah had blessed, said, “Enter upon them through the gate — for as soon as you enter it, behold, you shall be victorious! And in Allah you must place your trust if you are [truly] committed to Him!” But they said, “O Moses! Behold, never shall we enter that [land] so long as those others are in it. Go forth, then, you and your Sustainer, and fight, both of you! We, behold, shall remain here!”

Prayed [Moses], “O my Sustainer! Of none am I master but of myself and my brother [Aaron]: draw You, then, a dividing line between us and these iniquitous folk!” Answered He, “Then, verily, this [land] shall be forbidden to them for forty years, while they wander on earth, bewildered, to and fro; and sorrow you not over these iniquitous folk” (5:20–26).

In the course of this flowing Qur'an, there are important lessons associated with Allah (ﷻ) repeatedly taking the Children of Israel to task. They have been, time and again, presented with their own facts on the ground that condemn them in heaven. To the Children of Israel in Madinah, the whole scenario could not have been more stunning: an unlettered prophet — Muhammad (ﷺ) — coming to them from an illiterate society, approaching them with details about their own history, and exposing critical information that only they were privy to. The information that Muhammad (ﷺ) and this Qur'an were (and are) going public with has to do with "their own scripture," and "their own prophets." They were now hearing and watching a man from Arabia recounting prophecy and how they themselves had "dumbed down" their own scriptures to suit their own interests. All these *āyāt* in the God-given Qur'an could only authenticate the legitimacy of Muhammad (ﷺ). Not only was Muhammad (ﷺ) divulging their ineptitude and failures, he was also replacing their "worn-out" tradition with something that felt genuine and "more progressive." Simply stated, these Yahūd could not challenge this Prophet (ﷺ) and the Qur'an in a way that would debunk the logic, consistency, and rationality of what they were now listening to and watching grow from year to year and from place to place. What is paradoxical here is that instead of their building bridges of understanding, tolerance, and cooperation with their Islamic scripturalists, these Yahūd turned themselves into a hotbed of resentment and a fireball of foolishness. This lesson is yet another discourse on the follies of the Yahūd and their covenant shrugging nature.

As a reminder, recall that Mūsá (ﷺ) delivered the Children of Israel from the conditions of captivity and the subjugation of slavery, which they had to endure for a long time in Egypt. They lived through that liberation transformation from slavery in Egypt to freedom in the Sinai. It was Moses (ﷺ) who took them by the hand and primed them to the meanings of liberty and freedom, at which point they were ready to assume control of their own destiny in life. But still, even with all this, these Israelis were not thankful and appreciative. Typically, if someone does good to another, then

naturally it follows that the latter will return the favor. But Moses (ﷺ) having been more than good to the Israelis, found them to be insolent, ungrateful, and importunate. Moses (ﷺ), it can be said comfortably, wanted his people to be free, to prosper, and “to make it in life.” They, on the other hand, were concerned with a materialistic life of sensual gratification more than they were concerned with a principled life of spiritual satisfaction. Once again, in this Qur’anic journey, these Israelis are found to be notorious for their irreconcilability with principle and for being at odds with their prophet. It seems like if there is anything genetic about the Israelis, it is their ability to decamp from their prophets and to revoke their religious doctrine.

This lesson recounts an incident in the prophetic experience of Moses (ﷺ) with his people, focusing on how they, when the moment of truth arrived, turned tail and suddenly retreated from what they perceived to be a hazardous situation,

And, as it were, Moses said to his people, “O my people! Recall the blessings that Allah bestowed upon you when He raised up prophets among you, and made you your own masters, and granted you [privileges] such as He had not granted to anyone else in the world... (5:20).

This Qur’an is an open Book, an accessible scripture, and a transparent register. For the record, the narrative herein is given from on high to Muhammad (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims to present to the Israelis in particular and to all people in general. So what is it that the committed Muslims are to go public with? It is the exchange of words and ideas between Moses (ﷺ) and his own people, that were heretofore cloistered away from public appraisal. The context remains important, as this incident occurred at a time when Moses (ﷺ) had saved his people from the land of slavery. These holier-than-thou Israelis should have been grateful and accommodating of the fact that Moses (ﷺ) had rescued them and their future generations from the bondage of Pharaoh and from “third-class” citizenship in Egypt, which had reduced them to little

more than chattel. Upon being rescued from this humiliating subjugation, one would think that they would naturally owe God obedience, and Moses (ﷺ) an attitude of graciousness and goodwill. But, given their historical sense of entitlement, this is too much to expect. Had these Israelis just considered the bigger picture, they would have realized that God, in His ultimate wisdom, brought prophets out of their historical experience and phenomenal suffering, and now finally He had placed them in a position to become the masters of their own destiny. There is much here to be thankful for. God's favors and privileges to them reached a climax with their becoming free and having the irreproachable counsel of a prophet — Mūsá (ﷺ) — to show them the way forward and to explain to them what to do. If nothing else, they should pause and reflect on these acts of gracious kindness.

Firstly, and probably most importantly, many if not most of the Prophets (ﷺ) came directly from them. In the immediate setting of the current context, they had Moses and his brother Aaron (ﷺ) to rely on. Before that, there were many others. What needs to be understood here forthwith is that their suffering and patience “paid off” or was redeemed. Henceforth, the will of God would be expressed in a stream of prophets whose shared mission would be to move them forward in their relationship with Him. All the prophets commissioned for the Children of Israel, who were to come after Moses (ﷺ), honored the Torah, applied the law, and reinforced each other; even Jesus (ﷺ) came to refine the Torah and not to contradict it.¹⁶⁰

Secondly, the Israelis should become conscious of the fact and favor that God “extracted” rulers out of their peculiarly powerless social condition in Egypt. This is not to be confused with some translations and interpretations that suggest the Israelis had their own kings. Before Moses (ﷺ), they were not ruled by a *king* — in the way the word is understood today. After their deliverance through the agency of Moses (ﷺ), God rendered them into masters of their own affairs. In today's phraseology, it could be said that they now were on their way to “self-determination,” after having endured slavery in an oppressive Egypt.

Thirdly, the Israelis were given benefits, prerogatives, and entitlements that were not given to any other people. This would appear to mean that the Israelis were given the “Law” that enables society to make the transition from personal morality to social justice. This prerogative and privilege at that time put them on the “cutting edge” of the human experience. They were expected to blaze a trail and become the pacesetters for other peoples and societies — to be that “light unto nations” so to speak.

What Is the “Holy Land”?

With all this in mind, the Israelis should think carefully about what Moses (ﷺ) was telling them, “**O my people! Go into the holy land that Allah has assigned to you...**” This land is holy because it is designed to be idol-free and vacated of pagan practices. *Holy land* may also mean a blessed territory — blessed in a geographic as well as spiritual sense. As far as the Church is concerned, it appears that the “Holy Land” refers to Israel, because of its association with Jesus (ﷺ) and the Old Testament. The contemporary Zionist mindset defines the “Holy Land” as its nation-state boundaries, represented by a fluctuating “Israel.” Circumscribed by this Holy Land definition are holy places that include such areas as Palestinian shrines — Jewish, Christian, and Muslim, ancient and modern — that are associated with biblical or Qur’anic incidents, or commemorate saints of the faith concerned; such shrines are numerous. More strictly, the holy places are associated with centers of pilgrimage, of which the most famous in the “Jewish” mind are the Temple area; the *masjid* at al-Khalīl (Hebron), also known as the Cave of the Patriarchs or al-Ḥaram al-Ibrāhīmī; the Western (Wailing) Wall; and the Churches of the Holy Sepulcher and the Nativity. Many others are scattered throughout the country, such as the Christian churches at Nazareth and the Jewish shrines at Meron.

In today’s secularly polluted politics, the “Holy Land” describes nine shrines, the use of which are shared or disputed by members of different religions, or denominations within one religion, and which are the subject of special regulations. These are,

- a. in the area of al-Quds (Jerusalem):
 1. the Church of the Holy Sepulcher and its surrounding area including Dayr al-Sultān,
 2. the Sanctuary of the Ascension,
 3. the Tomb of the Virgin,
 4. the Western Wall of the Temple area,
 5. al-Masjid al-Aqṣá, and
 6. the Dome of the Rock;
- b. in the Bethlehem area:
 7. the Church of the Nativity,
 8. the Milk Grotto, and
 9. the Shepherds' Fields.

Their ultimate ownership remained by pre-colonial administrations in the hands of the government. Their disposal, it is said, has been governed by the “Status Quo,” an Ottoman decree issued in 1757 and confirmed in 1852. By the Treaty of Paris (1853) at the conclusion of the Crimean War, the colonial European powers undertook to maintain its provisions. The United Nations in late-1947 recommended that unrestricted access to the holy places should be given both by Israel and the Arabian states. The principal Jewish holy places are the Western Wall (in what many Jews consider to be the Temple site), to which the Jews until 1967 had conditional access; and Rachel’s Tomb, outside Bethlehem, which alone was in Jewish/Zionist hands. When these sites were in colonially manufactured “Jordan” they were barred to Jews. In addition, there were all over the country, particularly in Galilee, tombs and the like that are traditionally associated by the Jews with leading biblical figures and rabbis of the Talmudic period. These were throughout the European Middle Ages places of pilgrimage.

Various Islamic sources define the Holy Land (al-Arḍ al-Muqaddasaḥ) as the land that extends from al-‘Arīsh in Egypt to the Euphrates in Iraq.¹⁶¹ Others define the Holy Land as al-Shām (the Levant) and, hence, it may be fair to say that the Holy Land refers to geographical Syria (Syria, Lebanon, Palestine, and Jordan).¹⁶² This particular part of the world is also called the Land of

Return and the Promised Land. It runs in the minds of scholars that the progeny of Abraham (ﷺ) has been promised this territory, and therefore it becomes accurate to add on to it al-Ḥijāz (where Makkah and Madinah are located) and other surrounding Arab territories. Thus, Moses (ﷺ) left Egypt and led the Israelis into this geographical area, the Holy Land, as it was promised to the offspring of Abraham (ﷺ) — Hebrews and Arabs. Moses (ﷺ) wanted to settle with his people in this particular area, leaving the Arabian cousins to their lands at that time. In today's cramped political geography of nation-states the area roughly referred to as Palestine is in a general way the "Holy Land." Palestine is one of the names, found four times in the Old Testament, to denote the Holy Land (later Zionist politics would call it "Israel"). The passages in the Old Testament where the word *Palestine* is used are,

The people shall hear, and be afraid: sorrow shall take hold on the inhabitants of Palestina (Exodus, 15:14);

Rejoice not thou, whole Palestina, because the rod of him that smote thee is broken: for out of the serpent's root shall come forth a cockatrice, and his fruit shall be a fiery flying serpent. And the firstborn of the poor shall feed, and the needy shall lie down in safety: and I will kill thy root with famine, and he shall slay thy remnant. Howl, O gate; cry, O city; thou, whole Palestina, art dissolved: for there shall come from the north a smoke, and none shall be alone in his appointed times (Isaiah, 14:29–31);

Yea, and what have ye to do with me, O Tyre, and Zidon, and all the coasts of Palestine? will ye render me a recompence? and if ye recompense me, swiftly and speedily will I return your recompence upon your own head (Joel, 3:4).

In some versions of the Bible, these verses may contain the word *Philistia* instead of *Palestina*. This reflects the name of the land as the original home of the Philistine people in the coastal region

from Ghazzaḥ (Gaza) in the south to Yāfā (Jaffa or Joppa) in the north. The title “land of Israel” (1 Samuel, 13:19) entered into the lexicon with the invasion of the Israeli tribes who eventually, in the reign of David and the later Hasmonean Kingdom, took as possession the land from Dan in the north to the Negeb (Negev), with Bi’r al-Sab’ (Beersheba) as the principal town, in the south.¹⁶³ There are worldwide media and academic attempts to render the word *Palestine* an archaic name, and in some quarters, a geographical designation for the “land of Israel.” The word *Palestine* and what it stands for, insofar as it is associated with resisting and rejecting occupation, is still an indelible feature of the peoples who are opposed to Zionist Israeli annexation of the Holy Land.

Palestine occupies a strategic position on the map of the Syrian Levant or Fertile Crescent, which spans the two great ancient civilizations of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The coastal corridor was a much traversed region, affording commerce and armies an easy passage in both directions. The coastal road, traditionally known as Via Maris, ran “by the way of the sea,” referring to the Mediterranean or Great Sea, from Egypt across the coastal plain to the west side of the Sea of Galilee, then to Damascus in Syria, and on to Mesopotamia.¹⁶⁴ Other routes of lesser importance follow the rim of the Transjordan plateau from the Gulf of ‘Aqabaḥ in the south, and go north to Damascus.¹⁶⁵ The occupation of this area can be established through the towns listed in the Book of Numbers, 21:27–30. Yet another route offers the shortest distance between Sinai and the land of biblical Israel, connecting towns such as Kadesh-barnea and Beersheba in the south via al-Khalil (Hebron), al-Quds (Jerusalem) and Shechem in Samaria, and linking the important meeting place of Megiddo at the point where several other caravan routes converge.¹⁶⁶ An observation, with geographers and the flow of the Old Testament historical narrative, indicates that all these routes follow a north-south axis, with mountainous regions forbidding much easy passage along an east-west alignment.

In still one more perspective, Palestine is divided into several distinct areas, each with its own geology, climate, agriculture, and peculiar contact with other cultures,

1. the Central Highlands – the “hill country” in the Old Testament, they rise to about 3,000 feet, with a gentle slope to the west toward the Mediterranean Sea and a more abrupt descent to the Jordan Valley. The upland areas, largely infertile, are seen around al-Quds, and the mountainous region around Samaria that extends to the Carmel Range (elevation about 2,000 feet, but dips to the Plain of Esdraelon).
2. the Plain of Esdraelon – lies in the path of the elevated backbone of the Palestinian geological ridge that runs north-south. Its alluvial soil (deposits) made it a prized agricultural center and much sought after in the covetous history of Zionist claims to Palestine, especially as the main trade routes passed through this basin around Megiddo.
3. Galilee – denotes a hilly area to the east, with two sections, upper and lower. The rainfall and the condition of the soil made Galilee a thriving agricultural locale, with other trades, such as fishing and commerce in the Sea of Galilee adding to prosperity and attracting a large population. The northern portion of Galilee made it more open to outside influence, culturally and religiously, than the more sheltered south.
4. the Coastal Plain – as its name implies, it denotes the territory and cities bordering the Mediterranean, originally called Palestine or Philistia; it extends from Ghazzaḥ (Gaza) to the Plain of Sharon in the north. A valley links this northerly region with the Plain of Esdraelon.¹⁶⁷
5. the Shephelah – literally *valley*, it consists of an undulating (ripple) belt of land connecting the coastal area to the mountains of Judea.¹⁶⁸ It is the setting of much of the history in the time of the Judges and the early monarchy (Book of 1 Samuel); at one end of the Shephelah lies the Valley of Aijalon, another main route for conquering armies to pass.¹⁶⁹
6. the Jordan Rift Valley – set on the east of the backbone of the chain of mountains that run north-south. This depression in the earth's crust forms not so much a valley as a hole in the surface of Palestine's terrain. The Jordan River follows its course through a geological fault, and along the way elevation

levels are among the lowest anywhere in the world. The river flows by a dense jungle of wild animal life and vegetation called “the Jungle of the Jordan” (Jeremiah, 49:19; 50:44), until it empties into the Dead Sea, which is surrounded by a network of caves and mountainous areas, upon one of which is the Citadel of Masada on the western shore.¹⁷⁰

7. Transjordan – as the name suggests, it denotes the region on the east bank of the river settled by the two and a half tribes (Numbers, 31:1–27) after their wilderness wanderings. The region is fertile — a factor in the tribes’ choice to remain on the east of the Jordan River — and borders on Moab, which was noted for its sheep-rearing (2 Kings, 3:4).¹⁷¹

The geographical, cultural, political, ideological, and religious names that have been given to the Holy Land are numerous; much more numerous are the local areas and the changing and intermingling communities that lived on this land since the earliest times. The name *Canaan* is commonly known to refer to this same area. Canaan was used to refer to the land of the ancient Semitic-speaking peoples, living in the coastal areas of modern “Israel” and “Syria,” but also extending inland to the Jordan River and the Dead Sea. It was divided into various city-states during the early-2nd millennium BCE, but mostly fell under the control of the Israelis and other powers from the late-13th century BCE. In some academic quarters, the name Canaan can be traced to one of the sons of Ham (Genesis, 9:18; 10:6).

The Holy Land sits at a sensitive crossroads where the influence and history of Asia, Africa, and Europe converge. In the ancient world it was the shore-front that drew in Assyrian, Egyptian, Persian, and Greek military waves. With all the bygone and current “superpower” ins-and-outs, it has become quite difficult to trace a definitive frontier for this Holy Land. It would appear though that the Bible speaks about an area extending from southern Sinai to mid-Syria (south to north) or from the Nile River to the Euphrates River (southwest to northeast) as the general expanse of the Holy Land. In the Islamic view of history, these were

territories that came under the rule of Prophet Sulaymān (ﷺ) who ruled according to unadulterated scripture and was a leader in the best tradition of prophets and sages. He administered his government and presided over his society with the high standards of divine direction and justice on earth. His dominion over this vast territory was not what might be characterized today as a racial government or a nationalist political order; how could it be when God does not sanction exclusivist and discriminatory administrations?

The opening remarks in this lesson highlight a historical fact that accompanied the “disintegrationist” collectivity of Banū Isrā'īl. The Children of Israel are reminded of Allah's (ﷻ) bounties and benevolence. The only durable condition for this “flow of premiums” from God to the Children of Israel was their adherence to the covenant. This “rise-and-fall” movement of the Israelis throughout the passage of time has become, through the openness of this Qur'an, a matter of reflection and a lesson for everyone. The discourse here encourages the Prophet (ﷺ), all Muslims, and all other living and listening people to bear in mind the interaction between Moses (ﷺ) and his people at a time when they all were delivered from the abject condition of slavery in Egypt, at a time when they had escaped the “shock and awe” of the infamous Pharaoh and his governmental structure and institutions.

Allah's (ﷻ) favor upon the Children of Israel was prolonged and plentiful. Firstly, they were privileged with a long sequence of prophets who were an offshoot of their culture and heritage, and who were dispatched as a consequence of the circumstances they found themselves in, good or bad. They were blessed to have a “history” of prophets from Abraham (ﷺ) to the many others who succeeded him, until this historical sequence ended with Jesus (ﷺ). This entire chain of prophethood is considered by them to lie within their “tribal consortium.” However, with the concluding chapter in the history of scripture and prophets — the Qur'an — the Children of Israel will have to see things beyond the lens of their own exclusivism. If they claim Abraham (ﷺ) — as they do — then they will have to accept the fact that Muhammad (ﷺ) has now come as a full prophet and an authentic apostle from the other branch of

the Abrahamic family lineage: he is the grandson of Ibrāhīm through Ismā'il (ﷺ).

It is the Israeli mindset that harps upon a bloodline of Abraham through Isaac through Jacob (ﷺ), and because of this, they claim they cannot warm up to any other divine reference other than the Torah, as this was the reference of their genealogy of prophets, even if it comes through the agency of the last Abrahamic prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ). And they say this despite the fact that this final Prophet (ﷺ) clarified for them what their own sages had altered in the Torah, and that anyone claiming Ibrāhīm would be foolish to believe that Muhammad (ﷺ) came with something alien. True, the quantity of prophets who were selected from their own “tribe” was unprecedented, but how does this detract from the quality that came to them and all humanity through Muhammad (ﷺ) and this final holy Writ, the Qur'an?

Secondly, they were elevated via the will of God to be at times the masters of their own destiny, as a consequence of their enduring the awful conditions of slavery and as an outcome of “others” determining their future. The Children of Israel should remember that they were rescued from the humiliation of slavery by God Himself. They can never forget that they were once the underclass of the world and through their covenant with God they were taken to “the top of the world.” After God’s hand delivered them from slavery, they became free.

Thirdly, Banū Isrā'il should bear in mind they were blessed in a way that no other people of the time were. God’s power worked for them like it worked for no one else. They saw the sea part so that they could find their way out of bondage and into freedom. They saw how their enemy drowned in front of their very eyes. They saw how clouds were brought to shade them from the elements of nature. They saw how accessible food was to them even though they were in the “middle of nowhere” in the Sinai. And finally, they saw many other “miracles” that were the product of their living up to the responsibilities and obligations of their covenant with God.

At the time of Mūsá (ﷺ), the Children of Israel were challenged to bring their collective mind to these facts of life and then

listen to their prophet as he told them Allah's (ﷻ) words, **“O my people! Move into the Holy Land that Allah has assigned to you.”** Here, the phrase, *my people*, is neither a racist statement, nor an ethnic description. It refers to a social order that belongs to a prophet who belongs to Allah (ﷻ). At a time when the Children of Israel were honoring their covenant with God they were considered the people of Moses (ﷺ). Only then were they given the “right” to live, dwell, and reside in the Holy Land. No current people have the right to claim the Holy Land when they are in violation of the covenant and when they, therefore, no longer belong to God's prophet(s). This unambiguous *āyah* does not give the Israelis of today a historical, an automatic, a religious, or a military justification to be the dominant power in the Holy Land. Even if there are some religious Zionist minds that claim the “Jews” are the biblical inheritors of this Holy Land, this does not mean that their occupation is synonymous with the expulsion of other followers of scripture, the uprooting of a population that has dwelled their since the dawn of history, and the transformation of the population of the Holy Land who are not “Jews,” due to discriminatory Zionist policies, into the equivalents of the Jewish slaves in Egypt. Today's Zionist argument that the Jewish “race” has a biblical and historical claim to take back, possess, and settle in the Holy Land is false and bogus in light of what Allah (ﷻ) has revealed here.

Considering the pro-Zionist mentality on this matter, it is said in the Old Testament,

...but the Lord appeared to Abram and promised, “I will give this land to your family forever” (Genesis, 12:7, Contemporary English Version);

At that time the Lord made an agreement with Abram and told him: I will give your descendants the land east of the Shihor River on the border of Egypt as far as the Euphrates River (Genesis, 15:18, Contemporary English Version).

These verses are said to have been revealed to Abraham (ﷺ) before the birth of his son Ishmael (Ismā'il).¹⁷² But then after Ismā'il (ﷺ) was born and mention is made of a multitude of offspring, the following passage is to be found in the Bible,

I will give you and them the land in which you are now a foreigner. I will give the whole land of Canaan to your family forever, and I will be their God (Genesis, 17:8, Contemporary English Version).

However one looks at it, there is no escaping the conclusion that the Semitic Arabs are included in these meanings, as they are the growing multitudes of the progeny of Abraham (ﷺ). Thus, God's promise is inclusive of the Arabs. And, in fact, through a long-term view of that geography and history, the whole area of the "Holy Land" is inundated with the Arab descendants of Abraham (ﷺ). After the birth of Isaac (ﷺ), the Bible records no such promise for his descendants.

The time frame and the number of (Arab) people from the descendants of Abraham (ﷺ) does not favor the Zionist interpretation. The overwhelming presence in that part of the world has been an Arab Semitic presence. It is the inclusive nature of these (Arab) Semites that has fulfilled God's word and not the exclusive nature of the Zionists. The latter are the Euro-racists cloaked by the presence of "Arab Jews" (from Morocco, Yemen, Iraq, and Egypt, among others) who give a veneer of Semitism to the Zionist project, which has been defending its intrusive and forceful presence in the Holy Land by the brutal use of force and the ongoing carnage of warfare.

It is true that the Children of Israel lived in the Holy Land at one time in history as masters of their own destiny, but that was when they upheld the covenant of the Lord, of God Himself. Shouldering the covenant is equivalent to blending into the will of God, which is another way of saying they were conforming to God's authority and counsel. This particular state of mind and frame of action is the generic definition of being a *muslim*. Consequently,

here is where the true meaning of Judaism and the true meaning of Islam coincide: that is, there is no room in God's social pattern (*dīn*) for racism and no privileges for an elitist tribe or a superior people. From an Islamic and Qur'anic understanding of history the Children of Israel who lived at one time in the Holy Land did so in obedience to God and therefore are part of scriptural and prophetic history, which is now continued by the upholders of today's covenant responsibilities outlined in the final holy Book, the Qur'an.

This lesson contained in these *āyāt* may be the authentic position that is represented in the words of what is left of the Bible,

Leave this place and go into the land that belongs to the Amorites and their neighbors the Canaanites. This land includes the Jordan River valley, the hill country, the western foothills, the Southern Desert, the Mediterranean seacoast, the Lebanon Mountains, and all the territory as far as the Euphrates River. I give you this land, just as I promised your ancestors Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Now you must go and take the land (Deuteronomy, 1:7–8, Contemporary English Version).

While it is evident that Isaac and Jacob (ﷺ) are mentioned in this verse, there is no “eternal promise” given to them. The eternal promise was given to Abraham (ﷺ) and his descendants, which would include the descendants of both Isaac and Ismā'il (ﷺ). In today's language, this would include both the Hebrews and the Arabs. What has to be underscored and reiterated here is that this only applies to the descendants of Isaac and Jacob (ﷺ) so long as they obey God, honor His covenant, and apply His law.

The “politically correct” thing to believe in a Zionist controlled international order, which is prevalent today, is that the Holy Land belongs to the Jews. This is not what the Bible says and it certainly is not what the Qur'an is explaining here. There has never been a blanket scriptural statement that mandates the Holy Land as the possession of Jews irrespective of who these “Jews” are and until the end of time. It simply is not so. The control and com-

mand of the Holy Land is contingent upon obeying the laws of God and conforming to His will. This is what has been clarified in these *āyāt*.

The Qur'an dissects the internal character of the Children of Israel and announces in *Sūrah al-Isrā'*, also known as *Sūrah Banī Isrā'il*, that these Israeli charlatans are, have been, or will be responsible for worldwide corruption on earth twice in human history. Each time they do this, it is Allah (ﷻ) who releases ominous forces against them so as to humble and humiliate them. Their cities are overrun, their temples are destroyed, and their possessions are plundered,

And we made [this] known to the Children of Israel through revelation: twice, indeed, will you spread corruption on earth and will indeed become grossly overbearing! Hence, when the prediction of the first of those two [periods of iniquity] came true, We sent against you some of Our conforming subjects renowned for their warlike character, and they ravaged your territories: and so the prediction was fulfilled.

And after a time We allowed you to prevail against them once again, and aided you with wealth and offspring, and made you more numerous [than ever]. [And We said], "If you persevere in doing good, you will but be doing good to yourselves; and if you do evil, it will be [done] to yourselves." And so, when the prediction of the second [period of your iniquity] came true, [We raised new enemies against you, and allowed them] to disgrace you utterly, and to enter the Temple as [their forerunners] had entered it once before, and to destroy with utter destruction all that they had conquered (17:4–7).

Obviously, Israelis who are troublemakers, mischief instigators, and the reason for global instability are not the Israelis who honor God's covenant and bow down to His orders. They may have all the

media power in the world to make the point that they are the true followers of Abraham (ﷺ), the genuine descendants of Israel, and the chosen people of God, but the facts on the ground and their own endeavors testify against them, condemning them to the hypocritical and profane position they placed themselves in by the ugly work of their hands and minds. It is only Allah's (ﷻ) expansive mercy that gives them a chance to return to the fold of God every time they run away from it,

Seemingly, your Sustainer may have mercy on you [the Children of Israel] and if you return [to the ways and means of corruption] We will return [to Our ways of punishing you] (17:8).

This means that the Israeli thrust into “politics” carries within it the tendency to cause commotion, corruption, and instability on earth, and therefore they will be compensated with divine justice and divine penalties, in this worldly life and the next. The intrusion of “political Jews” into public life led to their suffering during the time of Jesus (ﷺ) and then, later, during the time of Muhammad (ﷺ). Consequently they have had to endure being scattered throughout the world in what appears to be an endless diaspora.¹⁷³

The understanding of these *āyāt* presents the Children of Israel in a pendulum relationship with the covenant. At times they honor it and at times they profane it. The Qur'an has brought them full-circle and now they should know they can only honor God's covenant by reconciling themselves to the truth in it and joining with their cousins, the Arab Muslims who themselves have not abandoned the core Qur'an and the essence of scripture. It would appear that it is impossible for the Israelis of the 21st century, who have become saturated with the invectives of racist Zionism to come to terms with the inclusive covenant contained in this open Book, the Qur'an. They are hung up with their racist priorities and their disregard for other scriptural peoples.

The worldwide political current has favored Israeli racism because the world order is constructed, by and large, on national-

ism, ethnic exclusivity, and racial supremacy. This racist and nationalist tide has been so powerful in the 20th and 21st centuries that even the “post-racial” Muslims have been infected by it. The Islamic bond has been virtually dissolved in the political arena, only to be replaced by nationalist ideologies and divisive political parties. Due to the disintegration of the covenant’s “political and ideological” meanings in the Muslim territories, the door has been flung open for Zionist penetration under the deep cover of its nationalistic equivalents — Arabian nationalism, Persian nationalism, Turkish nationalism, etc. Therefore our world today has had to impotently stand witness to the usurpation of al-Quds, the occupation of the Holy Land, and the militarization of the entire region. All this is a natural result of both the Jews and the Muslims abandoning their covenant with their Sustainer.

So even though we have a God-given order to go and enter into the Holy Land, “we” (Jews or Muslims) are not entitled to do so if we have abandoned God by trivializing and then vacating His covenant, especially when we know and affirm that His covenant offers justice to the human condition on earth. But affirming the covenant with words and supplications is one thing; carrying it is quite another. All affirmations are to be validated with transformational deeds, hence, **“...but do not retreat [from your military assignment of faith], for then you will be lost!”** How can any of us fail to move into a military level of obeying Allah (ﷻ) when we know that our enemies are void of Him? How can we become cowards and fear our “militarily” superior enemies when we should know that Allah (ﷻ) is on our side, and He is “militarily” superior to those who occupy this Holy Land? If we fail to launch a struggle on Allah’s (ﷻ) terms then we will have failed in upholding our covenant with Him. If we fail to mount a military campaign as required by Allah (ﷻ) we will fail to have access to the land He designated as holy. It will be denied to both of us, Jews and Muslims, alike. The land of milk and honey is no longer ours and we will have to suffer a diaspora the likes of which only those who betray Allah (ﷻ) will have to suffer.

The Craven Israeli Never Relinquished His Slave Mentality

What has to be highlighted here — and this needs to be reinforced several times over because of the incessant and widespread propaganda presence of the imperialist-Zionist axis in today's world — is the fact that Allah (ﷻ) assigned this Holy Land territory to His subjects who honor His covenant, work His will, and enshrine His values to apply His laws. The words *Jew*, *Christian*, and even *Muslim* have become shrouds within which atheists, secularists, and hypocrites hide their true selves from man; but they cannot hide their innate disposition from Allah (ﷻ). The Israelis, who were people of the covenant during the time of Moses (ﷺ), were then ordered by the Almighty to elevate their covenant responsibilities onto a military level; they were thus enjoined to bring their moral and legal values into the Holy Land. The growth of a “faith” will one day socialize the faith; and that will mean there will be an antagonistic social order that will oppose God's people, simply because a society of justice and morals cannot be assimilated into a society of injustice and immorality. To assume a position of distinction over a hostile society and to ascend above this society's beliefs and emotional investments will require the people committed to Allah (ﷻ) to have an unshakeable self-confidence that can only result from a visceral dependence on Him — and Him alone. This growth and development of Israeli society as it honored God's covenant brought it into a moment of social transition; it had to move from a primitive communal tribalism into a more substantial and influential social “nationalism” — minus the racist or ethnic disdainfulness inherent in today's nationalisms. In other words, the Israeli covenant holders could honor God, as a tribe, without being condescending to other tribes; and now, with the impending military engagement, they could honor God, as a nation, without being condescending toward other nations. Slavery may have left a very terrible mark on their lives; it may have jaded their psychology as their previous generations belonged to the Pharaoh — his chattel and his possession. However, when Mūsá (ﷺ) liberated them, they no longer belonged to Pharaoh, but went on to become God's subjects, God's people, and God's nation.

With this in mind, Moses (ﷺ) told them to march into the Holy Land. The Holy Land was not empty; in it there was a social order, a society, and a “system.” But if they were with God, there should have been little thought about what fearsome forces were assembled in that land, and they should have obeyed Moses (ﷺ) who was pointing them in the right direction on instructions from the Almighty Himself. Nonetheless, they answered, **“O Moses! Behold, dauntless people live in that land, and we will surely not go into it unless they move out of it; but when they move out, then, behold, we will go into it” (5:22).**

It is healthy to look at this Israeli attitude in context. In doing so we realize that the Egyptian enslavement of the Israelis had taken a toll on their motivation, ambition, and initiative. Slavery is a social plague; it has the effect of debilitating the human will. And when this slavery institution continues for many generations the enslaved become humiliated. The superpower machinery of the Egyptian system at that time — as is the case with our modern, more subtle and complex superpower behavior — made the Israelis feel they were incapable, by birth and nature, of doing anything noteworthy. This socially engineered taboo made the Israelis feel ashamed of their own selves; they were mortified, feeling inferior and unworthy — essentially being embarrassed of being an Israeli. This institutionalized discrimination by the Pharaoh’s government and its agencies against a people who were trying to honor God produced a sense of guilt and inferiority in the Israeli underclass, a sense of self-abasement. For any people suffering from a crippling inferiority complex, especially over several generations, it would take time for them to regain their self-confidence; then to muster the courage to ignite a social spirit that is capable of first steps, opening moves, and the enthusiasm to do God’s will on earth; and then finally to authenticate virtue with its social and legal expression. After a period of time Moses (ﷺ) — who is said to have lived hundreds of years — told these recuperating souls to get ready to embark on a mission that would entail various degrees of military engagement. Now, the time had come for these Israeli covenant bearers to move into the Holy Land.

The Israeli response to Mūsá (ﷺ) alerting them to a brash, callous, and unfearing people who were the inhabitants of the Holy Land — *qawman jabbārīn* — is a testimony to the physical features of their enemy. Despite the awesome appearance of their adversary, the Israelis should have been more sensitive to their moral and psychological relationship with God. Obviously, however, that did not figure into their “calculations.” Whether these people of tenacity and ruggedness, who the followers of Mūsá (ﷺ) were afraid to confront, were the Amalek or Amalekites cannot be said with certainty.¹⁷⁴ Nonetheless, in the religious psychology of the “Jews,” these ancient people, who were mentioned several times in the Bible, almost always as hostile to Israel, have taken on an image of the “bogeyman” enemy. A nomadic folk wandering between South Palestine and Canaan, they attacked the Israelis in the desert near Rephidim shortly after the Exodus, annihilating the weak and weary, according to Jewish sources.¹⁷⁵ However, they were eventually defeated by the Israeli army under Joshua’s command (Exodus, 17:13–16). Later, in another encounter, they were once again turned back, though incompletely, by King Saul (1 Samuel, 15:1–35). During the period of the Judges (12th–11th centuries BCE), the Amalek penetrated West Palestine at various points and their presence was a standing threat to the peace of the country. In David’s time, the Amalek invaded South Judea, burning down the town of Ziklag,¹⁷⁶ which precipitated David’s incursion against them, overrunning them until only 400 remained alive and subsequently escaped (1 Samuel, 30:1–31). In the reign of Hezekiah (720–690BCE), the tribe of Simeon overwhelmed the Amalekites and settled in their territory.¹⁷⁷ The name remained in rabbinic literature as a symbol of everlasting enmity to Israel, and Haman “the Agagite” (Esther, 3:1) is regarded as a descendant of Agag, king of Amalek (1 Samuel, 15:33).¹⁷⁸

All of these biblical accounts of the people who were in the Holy Land, a people who had become a chronic and unflagging military challenge to the Israelis, suggests that they were in material, physical, and military terms much ahead of the limited capacity and relatively smaller number of Israelis. The Qur’anic word *jabbār*,

which describes this society, means that the Amalek were unapproachable, unreachable, tough, pompous, intimidating, and thus, in charge.

In the scriptural literature of the Bible, the following may be an accurate account of the Israeli psychology that, in order to fulfill its covenant responsibility, would be required to engage in principled combat against a people whom the military odds apparently favored (author's emphasis in italics),

After exploring the land of Canaan forty days, the twelve men returned to Kadesh in the Paran Desert and told Moses, Aaron, and the people what they had seen. They showed them the fruit and said, "Look at this fruit! The land we explored is rich with milk and honey. But the people who live there are strong, and their cities are large and walled. We even saw the three Anakim clans. Besides that, the Amalekites live in the Southern Desert; the Hittites, Jebusites, and Amorites are in the hill country; and the Canaanites live along the Mediterranean Sea and the Jordan River."

Caleb calmed down the crowd and said, "Let's go and take the land. I know we can do it!" But the other men replied, "Those people are *much too strong for us*." Then they started spreading rumors and saying, "We won't be able to grow anything in that soil. And the people are *like giants*. In fact, we saw the Nephilim who are the ancestors of the Anakim. *They were so big that we felt as small as grasshoppers*" (Numbers, 13:25–33).¹⁷⁹

This narrative reflects how small the Israelis saw themselves in comparison with the heavyweight and massive enemy they were about to face. Not only did the Israelis themselves feel as insignificant as grasshoppers, but also that these titan people viewed them to be as trifling as grasshoppers.

These biblical narratives have not been cited because they are to be trusted. Rather, they are registered here because such

accounts from disfigured previous scripture have made their way into *tafsir* books and literature. Regardless of what is chronicled in the Bible, much of it inexact, the Qur'an contains all the relevant information to learn the necessary elements of this lesson without going into ethnographic details, geographic locations, and historical inaccuracies.

The Qur'anic revelatory *āyāt* illustrate in firm and flawless words that Mūsá (ﷺ) arrived with his people at the borders of the Holy Land, which at the time was hustling and bustling with a God-denying and oppressive social order. On orders from God, their prophet, who had rescued them from the degradation of Pharaoh, commanded his people to embark upon an effort that would place them as a society, physically and geographically, inside this Holy Land. The Israelis with Mūsá (ﷺ) understood that this physical and social relocation was going to entail some military effort — an effort that would be attended with fighting and dying for the cause.

At this point in their collective history the Israelis seem to have been overcome by the latent inferiority complex they inherited from Egypt. The crushing impact of centuries of Egyptian slavery on their common psyche had not been internally vanquished by their affinity with God. It was at this time that their core character revealed itself as they refused to undertake this Holy Land assignment. They rebelled against these “life and death” orders — and they were not short on excuses: we are weak and the enemy is strong, we are outnumbered and the enemy is numerous, we are technologically inferior and the enemy is technologically advanced, we are foreigners in this land and the enemy knows its topography and terrain, etc.

Slavery and especially the obsequious psychology of slavery is indeed an ugly sight. When a God-sanctioned leap into freedom demands struggle and sacrifice, the slave mentality and psychology is not up to the task. They shrugged away Moses' (ﷺ) command, saying they will not accede to that land until its vicious and ferocious people leave, that they will never set foot in it so long as the formidable ones are there. It may have been that they wanted some

miracles to facilitate their movement into the Holy Land. They may have thought that it is their right to be given this Holy Land on a silver platter. The essence of this higher covenant responsibility was liberation from their slave psychology and their subservient mentality. Weakness and the collective perception of weakness begets cowardice. Miracles and the supernatural acts of God were meant to give them the confidence and the affinity that once God's subject is with Him, the ultimate power and disposer of all affairs, then nothing else matters — not even leviathans and goliaths.

There comes a time when this attachment to God will require struggle and sacrifice to arrest evil and repel aggression, and to engender the common good and mutual prosperity. How can a people “feel” the presence of God and then abandon Him because it appears to them, in their limited view, that the enemy is enormous, ferocious, and all-victorious? This abandonment of God in these circumstances, in the presence of His Prophet (ﷺ) and with the clear communication of a scripture in the making, has to be the epitome of profaning the covenant. How can these Israelis say, **“But if they [these behemoths] exit it [the Holy Land] we, then, will move in”**? In doing so they revealed themselves to be the world-class cowards, crybabies, and chickens that they are. They had no valid reason for withdrawing from this assignment, the discharging of which would have been a fulfillment of their covenant responsibility.

Despite the sophisticated media curtain shrouding the circumstances on the ground like an “iron dome,” the craven, gutless, and Janus-faced character of these people is as much on display today as yesterday — if our Qur’anic eyes could only come open to see it. They have the respite to puff up their chests and pompously clog the information superhighway with their vitriol against Muslims and their Prophet (ﷺ) so long as America’s imperial army stands behind them fighting all their wars and (their) Saudi-Wahhabi foot soldiers stand in front of them short-circuiting any legitimate Islamic attempt to wipe this Zionist cancer of Israel “from the pages of history.” They are comfortable watching the gentile, born-again farm boys and alien Latin wannabees, who make up America’s frontline crusading regiments, get slaughtered, dismembered, and maimed on

the battlefield of Israel's security. They spin their yarns while literally millions of oppressed Muslims get displaced from their homes, seeing their societies virtually crumble in front of their weary and desperate eyes, again for the "security" of invaders, occupiers, and squatters. And while these unlettered Christians and benighted Muslims duke it out in wars that may last centuries, God's "chosen" recline opulently in their homes, boardrooms, and knessets saying, **"Go forth, then... and fight, both of you! We, behold, shall remain here!"** In history, these Israelis wanted Mūsá and his brother Hārūn (ﷺ) to go and fight a war on their behalf, and today they want the innocent Muslims and Christians to fight for them.

This is yet another of the innumerable lessons in this Qur'an that exposes who these Israelis really are. If they were willing to slight and snub Mūsá (ﷺ), as they did here in this narrative, of course they would be more than willing to diminish and disregard the consummate truth contained in this Book and represented by the holy Prophet (ﷺ) along with the altruistic Muslims around him. All of the early Muslims in Muhammad's (ﷺ) company proved they would struggle and fight when the time and circumstances merited such commitment for the upholding of their conviction, the honoring of their covenant, and the advancement of their just cause. Regrettably, Muslims today are at much too great a distance from this standard; those of them who are scrambling from one Zionist interest to another to appease these types of people, themselves cowards, either do not understand this Qur'an, do not want to understand this Qur'an, or do understand it but nonetheless want to profane it with their servility.

Muslims! You are advised to study this Qur'an. These human failures at implementing Allah's (ﷻ) commands and institutionalizing His social pattern, otherwise referred to as the Israelis, are not the people God chose to conduct principled warfare in His cause. Far from it. They showed their true colors here in front of Mūsá (ﷺ). They exposed themselves in Madinah when they were the fallback acolytes of the *munāfiqs*. They were the instigators of any type of opposition to an Islamic leadership and authority. These Yahūd found it convenient to lock hands with the *mushriks* in

Makkah against the Islamic power center in Madinah. The Yahūd have always been the brains behind the image distortion of Islam. They were even capable of infiltrating the Muslim ranks and causing mental distortions, the effects of which we still suffer from today. Their cowardice positions them in “secure” areas from where they foment all manner of animosity and hostility against anything genuinely Islamic.

Today’s “wishy-washy” Muslims just don’t get it. In the power pressure politics of our age, in which the imperialist-Zionist axis is fortified with nuclear weapons and an “impressive” military buildup, there are Muslims, especially “official Muslims,” who are salivating to please these Yahūd and their power structure. In doing so, these frivolous Muslims are reenacting the exact role that is being condemned here in this Islamic Qur’an. They cannot have it both ways. Either they can commit to the covenant and carry on with their divine responsibilities, as committed Muslims did in the time of Mūsá and in the time of Muhammad (ﷺ), and as they will do until the end of time; or they can try to sweet-talk their way out of it because they are more impressed with temporal military forces than with the force of Allah (ﷻ). He will ultimately pass judgment on us for what we do or fail to do, not for the rituals we sound off in three religious chords: Jewish, Christian, and Islamic.

It is Allah’s (ﷻ) inestimable and infinite knowledge that Muslims have here in front of them. This copious Qur’an is not a scripture that is vindictive; and it is not a scripture that is supplemental to the crimes against the covenant with God. It is *the Book, the Scripture, the holy Writ*: it tells man the truth about a human nature that morphed, in the followers of Moses (ﷺ) in particular, into a wrong, unjust, and squeamish character. The established historical course of political Judaism is the fact that it has shown how vile and visceral it can become wherever and whenever Islam takes its authoritative course, becoming independent of tyrants and opposed to oppressors. The millennial complex of political Jews — Zionists nowadays — is that they could never fault themselves for their own mistakes and sins. The stigma that has followed them throughout the ages has been the stain of an unrelenting diaspora.

This diaspora did not come from just anywhere, and for no reason; it became their lot because they deserted and forsook God.

In the context of this lesson they had to understand they belonged to a (holy) land only when they belonged to God. Once they decided to turn their backs on God, as they did here by refusing to go into the Holy Land with Moses (ﷺ), they incurred the damnation of this diaspora. The rabbis, scholars, sages, and intellectuals of the Yahūd are long overdue for a thorough examination of their whereabouts in history, time, and those critical junctures where God's will had to be manifested. They should take a deep breath and acknowledge that theirs has been a long history of prophets and scripture. During this time, they have repeatedly gone off course, broken from their prophets, and challenged the Almighty in unforgivable ways. They damaged their beliefs, bruised their conviction, and cracked their covenant. This incompatibility with God and His Prophets (ﷺ) turns out to be a permanent feature of theirs. All this would come back, as a matter of divine justice, to haunt them in many ways. Their deviation from God and covenant even took its toll on their morality and customs.

If only these Yahūdī “higher-ups” could take a dispassionate look at their own historical self, there is the possibility they could entertain a dispassionate view of the Qur'an, the Prophet (ﷺ), and Islam. In doing so they would realize that the final chapter of scriptural history was written with the revelation of the Qur'an; and as such a new set of people was tasked with the covenant and all the responsibilities it entails. Islam, with its divine standards, would henceforth become the all-inclusive scripture to finish the historical mission. Islam in its Muhammadi denouement was not meant to discredit or dishonor the Jewish legacy and all the details therein. Rather, it simply beckoned people of previous scripture to restart an effort for God in tandem, and this, precisely because Israeli failures and faults had become institutionalized over the centuries. In this re-evaluation of “Jewish/Israeli” history the chieftains of Yahūd may appreciate the Qur'an pointing to the human weaknesses, the selfish propensities, and the stubborn attitudes that caused the crumbling of the whole “Jewish experience” with God,

the prophets, and scripture. In its most negative and destructive sense, there is a visceral component of human incompetency and tribal solidarity in the “Jewish” failure of confidence in God’s power. Humanity, at the end of the day, has to be integrated. Therefore, the “Jewish” mishaps and misdoings should count toward improvement and efficacy for the generations that follow.

Dovetailing closely with this Qur’anic presentation is the fact that Muslims themselves are human beings, and hence they are vulnerable to repeating the mistakes of their scriptural predecessors — the Jews. Therefore, in the long course of an Islamic adherence to Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), the Muslims themselves will need all the information they can get to overstep the pitfalls that ensnared the Jews. The arrested development and ultimate stagnation of Jewish history, the Jews’ failure to enter into a scriptural brotherhood with the early Muslims around Muhammad (ﷺ) coincides directly with their inability to objectively think through this Qur’an and realize that Islam now is the replacement and successor to what they once were. The selfishness of the Jewish collectivity made it impossible for these Jews to see this light; and hence, it is the responsibility of confident, open-minded, and good-natured Muslims to alert them to the failures in their own history, if only to save others from the inevitability of Allah’s (ﷻ) corrective justice,

And behold, Moses said to his people, “O my people! Bear in mind Allah’s favors to you as He evolved prophets out of you and [He] made you masters of your own destiny and [He] has given you what he has not given anyone else [in the worlds]. O my people! Pass through and into the Holy Land that Allah has allotted to you; and do not wince and draw back, for then you will wind up losing” (5:20–21).

Mūsá (ﷺ) knew this was a make-or-break proposition for his people. This was going to be their litmus test. Mūsá’s (ﷺ) words betray a sense of commiseration and compassion for a people he knew very well. He recognized they may not find enough energy,

muster enough courage, and maintain enough togetherness to see their God-given task to completion. Mūsá (ﷺ) experienced their mettle as he accompanied them out of a tyrannical Egypt. He could see them trying to make a psychological and sociological transformation from the inferiority of an enslaved minority to the superiority of a liberated people. He could not but register their reaction to the demise of their enemy, the Pharaoh and his army, as they were consumed and drowned by the waters of the sea. Mūsá (ﷺ) also could not forget the time when they all came across a pagan people who were worshiping idols,

And we brought the Children of Israel across the sea; and thereupon they came upon people who were devoted to the worship of some idols of theirs. Said [the Children of Israel], “O Moses, render unto us a god in the manner that they [the materialists] have gods!” He replied, “Verily, you are people without any awareness [of right and wrong]!” (7:138).

He remembered the time when he left them for a short period to meet his Sustainer on the mount,

Thereupon Moses returned to his people full of wrath and sorrow, [and] exclaimed, “O my people! Did not your Sustainer hold out [many] a goodly promise to you? Did, then, [the fulfilment of] this promise seem to you too long in coming? Or are you, perchance, determined to see your Sustainer’s condemnation fall upon you, and so you broke your promise to me?” They answered, “We did not break our promise to you of our own free will, but [what happened is that] we were loaded with the [sinful] burdens of the [Egyptian] people’s ornaments, and so we threw them [into the fire], and likewise did this Samaritan cast [his into it].” But then, [so they told Moses, the Samaritan] had produced for them [out of the molten gold] the effigy of a calf,

which made a lowing sound; and thereupon they said [to one another], “This is your deity, and the deity of Moses — but he has forgotten [his past]” (20:86–88).

Mūsá (ﷺ) tested them and observed them when he caused water to gush out of the desert; he watched their reaction when they were provided with *manna* and *salwá* (quails), thus satisfying their appetites and pleasing their taste buds. But then he realized that they, amazingly, were yearning for the foods they had gotten used to when they were the slaves of Egypt: the herbs, appealing greens, appetizing vegetables, beans, lentils, and onions. These people were not patient or gracious enough to alter their eating habits in exchange for freedom and autonomy. Mūsá (ﷺ) understood he was dragging his people into liberty and a higher standard of life, even as they were “kicking and screaming” the whole way to freedom. Mūsá (ﷺ) lived through the time period when he brought them the tablets inscribed with the commandments as well as the associated obligations and duties, but they declined and defied any such responsibilities toward the Lord. The unsettling aspect of all this is that they turned down this relationship with God after indulging their senses with all the miracles, privileges, and supernatural acts God offered them. They finally agreed to bear the covenant — but only after seeing a mountain about to collapse upon them, having no other choice,

And [did We not say], when We caused Mt. Sinai to quake above the Children of Israel as though it were a [mere] shadow, and they thought that it would fall upon them, “Hold fast with [all your] strength to what We have vouchsafed you, and bear in mind all that is therein, so that you might remain conscious of Allah”? (7:171).

Mūsá (ﷺ) knew his people very well, and it would seem from the wording of the *āyah* that he was apprehensive about this demanding responsibility of a military nature. The narrative sug-

gests he was with them on the borders of the Holy Land — the land of return, the land preceded by their Exodus. This is where God promised that they would be the masters of their own destiny, with prophets to offer guidance and leadership.

Having the experience he had with them, Mūsá (ﷺ) was well acquainted with how his people would behave in various circumstances, and so he suspected that this elevated covenant responsibility was something the recently liberated Israelis would shun. Nevertheless, he was duty-bound to pass on God's order,

And behold, Moses said to his people, “O my people! Remember Allah’s kind acts and good deeds to you as He nurtured prophets from among you and made you sovereigns and He gave you what He had not given other peoples. O my people! Set foot into the Holy Land that Allah has entitled to you, and do not pull out [under military pressure] for you will fail to maintain your gain” (5:20–21).

The fact that prophets were fostered mainly in this “Israeli milieu” should have served to motivate these people around Mūsá (ﷺ) to go all the way into the Holy Land, come what may. In the Israeli mind a prophet is designated by God to convey His message to men and to give guidance for the future.

Israeli Failure Despite a Profusion of Prophets

Prophecy, an ancient institution originating in primitive times, appeared among early Semitic peoples, for instance, in Mesopotamia, Phoenicia, and Canaan; but in Israel, it took on a distinctive form.¹⁸⁰ The Hebrews implicitly believed they had been chosen by God who had sent them prophets to point out the right path. The prophet was primarily the protagonist of monotheism and morality, and fulfilled a decisive role in Jewish religious life and development alongside the priest and the sage. Only hints and scant information throw light on the pre-Mosaic period of prophet-

hood, but thereafter, as perceived within Judaism, there were three main periods of prophecy: the prophecy of Moses (ﷺ), the charismatic prophecy, and the rhapsodic prophecy.

The period of Moses (ﷺ) determined the fundamental content of the later prophecies and also, by means of the Torah, the Jewish nation's spiritual content, way of life, and mission. The decisive characteristic of Moses' (ﷺ) prophecy was that it was continuous and not the result of sudden inspiration.

The charismatic prophets, who followed Moses (ﷺ), were religious leaders guiding the nation in times of difficulty, two of which were Deborah and Samuel.¹⁸¹ With the rise of the monarchy, when public policy was handled by rulers and ministers, the prophet in Jewish history became increasingly prominent as a fighter for social morality, which at times would necessitate even a rebuke of the king for his moral lapses (Nathan and Ahijah the Shilonite).¹⁸² Together with their disciples, the so-called "sons of the prophet," they zealously opposed any manifestation of paganism (Elijah, Elisha).¹⁸³

Still tracing Jewish history and the internal Jewish mind, it appears that the rhapsodic prophecy debuted early in the 8th century BCE, first in Israel and later in Judah (known afterward as Judea). Previously, the prophets had mainly contented themselves with the spoken word, while prophetic circles committed accounts of earlier prophets to writing. According to Jewish sources, from the time of Amos, the prophets wrote down their own utterances, generally in a lofty language that constitutes the culmination of biblical poetry.¹⁸⁴ As formerly, the central motif was the admonition against religious corruption, but concomitantly the drive against social corruption began to take shape. Formalism was condemned unless accompanied by good deeds. One of the roles of the prophet was to foresee national disaster and hence sharpen the fortitude and determination of his flock against the inevitable misfortune, following which he would take various consolation and confidence building measures to resuscitate the perpetually dispirited Israeli psyche. The rhapsodic seers also uttered visions concerning the gentiles, but the central subject was still Israel, which,

as the elect of the Lord, was required to set an example and bear the punishment of failure. The eschatological belief that all evil men will be destroyed at “the end of days” but the righteous remnant of Israel will establish the kingdom of God was also expressed by the rhapsodic prophets.

Much of the popular appeal of prophecy can be attributed to the belief that the prophets could foresee the future, and later generations held that the prophecy contained visions down to “the last generation,” if interpreted aright. The prophetic utterances were generally oral or written, but sometimes the prophet would demonstrate his message with “signs.” Revelations came to the prophets in both waking and sleeping hours, and each prophet would later recapitulate the message before his people. According to rabbinic teaching, the spirit of prophecy ceased with the last of the “Minor Prophets,” one of whom was Zechariah. The spiritual role of the prophet thereafter was assumed by the “Men of the Great Synagogue” and the sages who succeeded them. These had acquired the faculty of interpreting biblical prophecies: indeed, “a Sage is higher than a Prophet” (*Bava Batra* 12a).¹⁸⁵ In the Messianic Age, however, the faculty of prophecy would be renewed.¹⁸⁶ The Hebrew Bible as it stands today applies the title “Former Prophets” to the historical books of Joshua, Judges, Samuel, and Kings (in the Christian tradition, other historical portions of the Bible are also comprised);¹⁸⁷ and the title “Latter Prophets” to Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and the Twelve Minor Prophets.¹⁸⁸

All of this prophetic history and the honor and glory of being with God, not to mention the myriad other blessings and services that came their way, should have been enough to lift and embolden the “Israeli spirit,”

Remember Allah’s blessings upon you as He promoted prophets from among you and made you sovereigns; and He gave you what He has not given anybody else. O my people! Flow into the Holy Land that Allah has portioned for you and do not withdraw [in defeat] for you then will stand to lose (5:20–21).

What more can anyone ask for? God had, at that time, consecrated them with prophets, judges, rulers, and sages. The only thing they had to do was to go into the Holy Land, and ultimately failing to execute that task, they ended up jettisoning God's blessings.

This event reveals the character of the Israelis to be profoundly disappointing. They demonstrated timidity, self-justification, a liberal willingness to run away from their divinely assigned task, and because a leopard cannot change his spots, a renunciation of the very covenant they had taken a solemn oath to uphold. Listen to these Israelis in their own words,

They said, "O Mūsá! But there are rugged and toughened people who are there [in the Holy Land]. For sure we will not move into it until they move out of it, and if they do move out we certainly will move in" (5:22).

It is hardship or the expectation of impending unsettlement that causes the true character of people to surface. In this instance the Israeli instinct could not hide itself. The ritualistic and legalistic cosmetic, which they don so skillfully, was exposed to be the surface adornment that it is, as the substance of courage and commitment necessary for such an assignment is not something one can simply paint on. These are qualities that attend action and heroic deeds, something averse to these Israelis who demonstrated themselves to be as disobedient to God as anyone could be. The determining factor here was the danger and threat they would have felt had they allowed themselves to be positioned between the power of God and a regional "superpower." It appears they had no consideration whatsoever for God's power and being on His side; despite all the miracles He had performed on their behalf, the only thing they could see was a temporal force that is fierce, awesome, and well beyond their limited capabilities. They were so afraid of this apparently fierce population that God's capability of securing victory for them once they decided to do His will never entered their minds. Susceptibility to harm, injury, and danger brings out the real self, a self that is denuded of misleading rituals

and doublespeak words. The perceived “clear and present” danger was more than enough for these Israelis to flee from their covenant responsibilities, which no doubt would have resulted in some amount of death and destruction. If God had promised them this land, the only thing left for them to do was to make the effort to settle in it. But they were not willing. They were expecting God to hand them an unearned victory while they sat poolside eating grapes and sipping tea.

Victory is contingent upon physical and social laws. Even if these Israeli wimps were given the benefit of the doubt that the vehement people dwelling in the Holy Land had the physical odds in their favor, then the “chosen people of God” should at the very least have realized that the social law is on their side when they are on God’s side. One of these laws is that victory or defeat in a war is not always determined by the side that has more material power as measured by the greater number of soldiers or the greater destructive capacity of weapons; rather victory often accrues to those who demonstrate capacities that cannot be tangibly measured, such as the tenacity to fight for a cause and the desire to sacrifice one’s life for principle and purpose. But the materially minded, odds driven Israelis could not see this either. The only thing they could see was reflected in their words, **“There really is a strong-minded and tenacious people living there [in the Holy Land], and we will not go in there unless they leave, and if they leave we will go right in.”**

As if to turn the page, the *āyah* then concentrates on two individuals, who unlike the rest of the Israelis, appear to have conscientized the fact that God knows best, that He is the ultimate power, that observing His command means prosperity, and that covenant responsibilities will require sacrifice,

[Whereupon] two men from among those who feared [Allah’s power, and] whom Allah had blessed, said, “Enter upon them through the entryway — for as soon as you enter it, behold, you shall be victorious! And in Allah you must place your trust if you are [indeed] committed to Him!” (5:23).

This is proof positive that Allah's (ﷻ) "calculations" do not balance the equation with superior numbers or the majority status of those who happen to have temporal power. In the divine equation, the thing that counts is what is right. In this particular instance, from among the multitudes of Israelis who were seeing the "knockout power" of a potential enemy, there were two men who were seeing the "knockout power" of a potent God. As these two stepped up to say the truth, to them, all the excuses and rationalizations of the Israeli crowd did not merit any further consideration; and for this reason, their words have become eternal verses in this everlasting Book, to be read by living Muslims until the end of time, "...two men who feared [the corrective power of Allah stepped up and] said..."

When man fears the shock and awe of God's power he can no longer even consider the trivial power of other men. This fear of God's almighty power reduces man-made "superpower nation-states" into dwarfs. Such are the men of God who speak when the moment beckons their resolve, who are not afraid to present truth to power, and who know which side committed Muslims are on. This is the kind of behavior that verifies a person's covenant commitment. It illustrates the dividing line between those who fear mortals instead of God and those who fear the almighty God instead of feeble mortals. No sane person can claim to honor the power of God and then give in to the unconvincing "power" of those who oppose Him.

The Israelis cannot be God's people when they fear other mortals more than God or fear them alongside God. The Israeli pragmatists may have had their own explanation for their position. Presuming that their internal thoughts and considerations were driven more by fear of worldly circumstances than by confidence in the vision of God, it could be inferred that they may have been anxious over their future in case they did not score a decisive victory over the belligerent people who were living in the Holy Land — *qawman jabbārīn*. They may have regarded this adversary to be both feared and respected because of its awesome bearing and impressive power; in other words these *jabbārīn* were formidable

and redoubtable. This, in the absence of a perception of Allah's (ﷻ) overwhelming power juxtaposed with a potential enemy that both outgunned and outnumbered them, may have been enough for them to justify their own apprehensive, cowering, and cringing attitude. Some of these Israelis may have initially thought that the battlefield calculations favored their victory, however, on further evaluation of the adversary, they found him to be awe-inspiring and confoundingly difficult to engage; hence, caught between pressure from their prophet to confront the enemy and their own waning confidence in their fighting abilities as well as the capacity of God to turn the battle in their favor, they developed an exaggerated and psychologically unhealthy form of fear — a morbidity. Some of them may have even trembled and shook when they realized that the odds were stacked against them in an unwinnable war against a gruesome and ominous enemy. All of these transparent manifestations of fear and dread prove that the hearts and minds of the Israeli people around Mūsá (ﷺ) were not saturated with Allah (ﷻ) and His power and ability.

All that was required of the Israelis was to enter upon the hawkish *jabbārīn* with all the confidence that accrues to those who bind to God, “**...for as soon as you enter, behold, you shall be victorious.**” This may be a reference to an initial military thrust that results in a decisive breakthrough, from where the rest of the battle would be akin to “cleanup” operations. If they could have allowed themselves to see with the eyes of their prophet, they would have realized that victory was just around the corner, “**And in Allah you must place your trust if you are [in truth] committed to Him!**” The committed Muslims of today should apprehend the fact that the Israelis of times past miserably failed the test given to them by God. And for their failure they have had to endure an exile that no other people have had to experience. Are the commitment-challenged Muslims today, who are having to endure massive dislocations and unprecedented degradation, giving an encore performance of this Qur’anicly condemned Israeli trait?

The two men who spoke of validating their covenant obligation by advocating for the military engagement are not mentioned

by name in the text of the Qur'an. *Tafsir* literature, though, has settled on them being Joshua and Caleb.¹⁸⁹ This appears to be simultaneously consistent with some biblical literature and in disagreement with other biblical details. To get a better understanding of the biblical narrative's incompatibility with the Qur'anic text (this incongruity is obviously related to the failure to preserve the Bible in its exact revelational form), one would have to consider Joshua and Caleb as they are projected by Judeo-Christian texts, and then look at the overall picture as presented here in this precise Qur'an.

In the Judeo-Christian narrative, Moses (ﷺ) is succeeded by Joshua (Numbers, 27:18–23; Deuteronomy, 31:7–29), whose leadership of Israel in the conquest of Canaan is recounted in the Book of Joshua. His name, sometimes spelled Hoshe'a (compare Numbers, 13:8, 16), means *Yahweh is salvation*. A Greek equivalent is "Jesus" (look at Acts of the Apostles, 7:45 and Hebrews, 4:8, and then compare the King James Version with Revised Standard Version). In many ways, the Old Testament writers present Joshua as a new Moses (ﷺ) — that is, as prophet, priest, and king. As prophet, like Moses (ﷺ), Joshua had a "spirit of wisdom" (Deuteronomy, 34:9; see Ecclesiasticus, 46:1 of the Apocrypha where he is called "successor of Moses in prophesies"). As priest, like Moses (ﷺ), he called upon the people to sanctify themselves and commanded the priests in the movements of the Ark of the Covenant (Joshua, 3:5–6). As king, Like Moses (ﷺ), he led Israel in the definitive covenant ceremony at Shechem (Joshua, 24:1–28).¹⁹⁰

From beginning to end, however, Joshua is preeminently a military figure. He first appears as the leader of Israel's war against the Amalek (Exodus, 17:8–16). With Caleb, he spied out the land of Canaan (Numbers, 13:16–29) and correctly argued, though failed to convince, that it should be taken (Numbers, 14:6–10). After Moses' (ﷺ) death at the border of the Promised Land, Joshua led the attack on Canaan, beginning with the crossing of the Jordan River (Joshua, 3:7–4:24) and the destruction of Jericho (Joshua, 6:1–27). The main thrust of his conquest, and that best supported by "archaeological evidence," must have been toward the

southern foothills and the Negev (Joshua, 10:28–43), with one major incursion into the north against Hazor (Joshua, 11:1–15). Joshua is reported to have died at the age of 110, and to have been buried at Timnathserah in central Palestine (Joshua, 24:29–30).

Beside Joshua, Caleb (meaning *dog*), the son of Jephunneh, was the second man (Numbers, 13:6; 1 Chronicles, 4:15) blessed by God, and he represented the tribe of Judah among the 12 men who spied out Kadesh (Numbers, 13:1–14:10). Only he and Joshua returned with encouraging reports, and they alone of the 12 lived to enter Canaan (Numbers, 14:38). In contrast to the other ten spies (excluding Joshua), Caleb is said to have had “a different spirit” and to have followed Yahweh “wholly” or “fully” (Numbers, 14:24; Deuteronomy, 1:36).

In the division of the land, Yahweh (God), through Joshua, gave Caleb the town of Hebron, from which he had to drive out “the three sons of Anak” (Joshua, 15:13). Othniel, Caleb’s nephew, captured neighboring Debir (Tell Beit Mirsim), and thereby won as wife, Achsah, Caleb’s daughter (Joshua, 15:16–17). Associated with the name Caleb is a territory south of Judah called the Negeb of Caleb (1 Samuel, 30:14). In what passes today as the Old Testament, the record of Caleb’s genealogy attempts to place him in the tribe of Judah, however it was already known that his father was a Kenizite (Numbers, 32:12). Nonetheless, any attempts to “Israelize” him notwithstanding, Caleb is remembered for contributing numerous progeny to the people of Israel and for being a man of fearless courage and strong faith in Yahweh’s promises of a land for Israel.

The above Judeo-Christian accounts of both Joshua and Caleb do fit the profile of the two men who wanted to pursue the covenant into its military dimension by moving against the people living in the Holy Land, which had become per God’s instructions the responsibility of His covenant-bearing people. But the biblical account, as it is today, relates nothing about the terrible consequences the Israeli people had to suffer when they failed to move on God’s orders: they were doomed to be civil foreigners in the area of their God-appointed land.

Therefore, in all the people of “faith” among the Israelis, who sported only a perfunctory attachment to God by virtue of their punctilious attention to legalism and ritual, there were only two men who did not have displaced fear. They knew Who to fear, while everyone else suffered from a severe case of dislocated phobia. The blessing Allah (ﷻ) endowed these two men with, as recorded in the *āyah*, was the obedience that followed from their fear of God’s retribution when all the other Israelis failed to move into the Holy Land, as they so clearly were divinely instructed to do. These two men of honor came forth candidly and emphatically, **“Enter upon them through the gate [a door-like movable access point in a fence or wall] of their city-state.”** That is all that has to be done to turn the military tide against these *jabbārin*, **“...for as soon as you enter it, behold, you shall be victorious!”**

This would mean that these Israelis were expected to give this potential military engagement their all-in effort, intensity, and resources — even though what they had may have been trivial, inconsequential, and lacking compared to their adversary. The “leap of faith” here is to understand that if people committed to God go ahead with their God-assigned duties, having only meager and scarce resources to fight an enemy, they should rest assured that the final outcome will be a triumph if only they place their trust in God, who will “fill in” for whatever they are lacking on the ground, **“And in Allah you must place your trust if you are [rightfully] committed to Him!”** These were the operative words of truth spoken by two men of God who knew how to distinguish between the real “superpower” and an artificial interloping “superpower.” This is a lesson that is hard to put into action, as is evident in this particular chapter of Banū Isrā’īl. Even with all this knowledge and background information, some frivolous Muslims have a hard time assimilating this lesson, for when the same moment in life arrives, they behave as if worldly military forces are God and God Himself is helpless and cannot offer them victory.

This experience of Banū Isrā’īl is the embodiment of faint-heartedness. Here are the Israelis themselves in their own words,

But they [the Israelis] said, “O Moses! Look, never shall we march into that [land] so long as those others are in it. March, then, you and your Sustainer, and fight, both of you! We, you see, shall remain here!” (5:24).

Obviously, the advice and counsel given by the two truthful men meant nothing to the larger Israeli commune. Their “collective self” insisted on breaking with God and Moses (ﷺ), and they were firm on disobeying both. They reiterated in their candid words that they shall never march into that Holy Land, which was home to a ferocious and fierce people, so long as the latter were living there. They knew that advancing into that land meant a battle and perhaps even a protracted war. And in their own minds they were not ready, they were not equipped, and they were not confident enough to take on those *jabbārīn*.

In so many words, how the Israelis responded to Mūsá (ﷺ) could have gone something like, “If you delivered us from Egypt on orders from your Lord so that we may settle in this Holy Land, which was promised to our fathers, knowing that to do so we will have to fight, then be advised we will not fight! That being the case, you, Moses, may go ahead, march on with your Lord, who ordered you to do this, into that rowdy and “terrorist” territory and fight as much as you want against those *jabbārīn* people. You and your Lord may “ethnically cleanse them,” both of you may eradicate them, or you both may just decide to expel them from the Holy Land. But when it comes to us, we are staying in our places, waiting and anticipating. We shall remain unarmed and demobilized!” What an argument this is for nonviolence, the Gandhi method, and pacifism. The word *qā'idūn* could either mean *static* or *demilitarized*; both meanings indicate that the Children of Israel would not partake in any military effort to move into the Holy Land.

Prayed [Moses], “O my Sustainer! Of none am I master but of myself and my brother [Aaron]: draw You, then, a dividing-line between us and these iniquitous folk!” (5:25).

At this point the differences between Mūsá (ﷺ) and his people were so great as to compel him to dissociate from them altogether; so he pleaded with Allah (ﷻ) to separate him and his brother Hārūn (ﷺ) from such degenerate people. The word *fāsiqs*, which is used here to describe the Children of Israel, means *decomposed people*. This, clearly, is not a reference to their physical composition as their bodies were probably as healthy as any average human being, if not more so. The decomposition here is in reference to their breaking away from God's covenant. They no longer, in the psychological sense of the word, were in an organic or constituent relationship with God. At this point, when the Israelis tore themselves away from God's order, they placed themselves in a hostile position to Mūsá (ﷺ). Mūsá's appeal to Allah (ﷻ) to part company with his people could also be understood to highlight his anticipation of the corrective measure that would ensue from Allah (ﷻ) in the form of a punishment corresponding to the intensity and depth of this Israeli disobedience of their Lord. So Mūsá (ﷺ) wanted, for himself and his brother, to be spared from the impending doom that would be visited upon such cowardly, insecure and ungrateful people.

Answered He, “Then, in fact, this [land] shall be forbidden to them [the Israelis] for forty years, while they wander on earth, bewildered, to and fro; and sorrow you not over these disintegrated people (5:26).

Allah's (ﷻ) answer to Mūsá (ﷺ) was that the Holy Land would be off limits to the Children of Israel as a matter of punishment. They would henceforth be constrained to move about from place to place, from locale to locale, and from region to region — aimlessly, frustrated, and without direction or purpose. They would have to suffer an exile along with all the bitter details that attend it. These people blatantly disobeyed Allah (ﷻ), who only instructed them to do what was in their own benefit, and as such, they would have to feel ostracized as never before. They rejected God and consequently they would have to endure what it is like to be rejected by

other peoples. At times they would be treated like outcasts, at other times like fugitives, but all in all they would have to put up with the distress and suffer the emotions of a pariah people. And even though this was going to be a form of justice that was on par with their magnitude of sin, Allah (ﷻ) told Mūsá (ﷺ), “...and grieve you not over these degraded people.” No prophet should feel uncomfortable with God’s measured penalty as it applies even to his own people. The moral and endeavoring relationship with Allah (ﷻ) is always closer than the blood and culture relationship with one’s own. In other words, Moses (ﷺ) was being advised that such people will ultimately and socially perish, and that he should not shed one tear for them.

Even though the Bible has been extensively quoted above about some aspects of this unfolding event, there are some Muslims and non-Muslims who require more corroborating evidence from the Bible so as to feel satisfied with a concurring narrative in the Qur’an. Thus, in order to scripturally cover this issue as extensively as possible, a biblical narrative from the Old Testament is reproduced below (Contemporary English Version, author’s emphasis in italics and the word *Israelite* has been changed to *Israeli*),

After the Israelis heard the report from the twelve men who had explored Canaan, the people cried all night and complained to Moses and Aaron, “We wish we had died in Egypt or somewhere out here in the desert! Is the Lord leading us into Canaan, just to have us killed and our women and children captured? We’d be better off in Egypt.” Then they said to one another, “Let’s choose our own leader and go back.”

Moses and Aaron bowed down to pray in front of the crowd. Joshua and Caleb tore their clothes in sorrow and said, “*We saw the land ourselves, and it’s very good. If we obey the Lord, he will surely give us that land rich with milk and honey. So don’t rebel. We have no reason to be afraid of the people who live there. The Lord is on our side, and they won’t stand a chance against us!*” The crowd threatened to

stone Moses and Aaron to death. But just then, the Lord appeared in a cloud at the sacred tent.

The Lord said to Moses, “I have done great things for these people, and they still reject me by refusing to believe in my power. So they will no longer be my people. I will destroy them, but I will make you the ancestor of a nation even stronger than theirs.”

Moses replied, “With your mighty power you rescued your people from Egypt, so please don’t destroy us here in the desert. If you do, the Egyptians will hear about it and tell the people of Canaan. Those Canaanites already know that we are your people, and that we see you face to face. And they have heard how you lead us with a thick cloud during the day and flaming fire at night. But if you kill us, they will claim it was because you weren’t powerful enough to lead us into Canaan as you promised. Show us your great power, Lord. You promised that you love to show mercy and kindness. And you said that you are very patient, but that you will punish everyone guilty of doing wrong — not only them but their children and grandchildren as well. You are merciful, and you treat people better than they deserve. So please forgive these people, just as you have forgiven them ever since they left Egypt.

Then the Lord said to Moses, “In answer to your prayer, I do forgive them. But as surely as I live and my power has no limit, *I swear that not one of these Israelis will enter the land I promised to give their ancestors. These people have seen my power in Egypt and in the desert, but they will never see Canaan. They have disobeyed and tested me too many times.*

“But my servant Caleb isn’t like the others. So because he has faith in me, I will allow him to cross into Canaan, and his descendants will settle there.

“Now listen, Moses! The Amalekites and the Canaanites live in the valleys of Canaan. And tomorrow

morning, you'll need to turn around and head back into the desert toward the Red Sea."

The Lord told Moses and Aaron to give this message to the people of Israel, "You sinful people have complained against me too many times! Now I swear by my own life that I will give you exactly what you wanted. You will die right here in the desert, and your dead bodies will cover the ground. You have insulted me, and none of you men who are over twenty years old will enter the land that I solemnly promised to give you as your own — only Caleb and Joshua will go in.

"You were worried that your own children would be captured. But I, the Lord, will let them enter the land you have rejected. You will die here in the desert! Your children will wander around in this desert forty years, suffering because of your sins, until all of you are dead. I will cruelly punish you every day for the next forty years — one year for each day that the land was explored. You sinful people who ganged up against me will die here in the desert."

Ten of the men sent to explore the land [Canaan] had brought back bad news and had made the people complain against the Lord. So he sent a deadly disease that killed those men, but he let Joshua and Caleb live (Numbers, 14:1–38).

The concern here is not with the fine points of this text; as was noted earlier, there are some passages that agree with the Qur'anic text and others that do not. Also irrelevant is the identity of the chronicler who wrote these passages, in what passes today as the Torah, after the divinely imposed exile on the Children of Israel. What, however, is a matter of importance is the practical and the relevant meanings that are to be drawn from this Qur'anic lesson.

People who are acculturated to oppression, who are ruled by tyrants, and who grow accustomed to injustice begin to lose their moral character. They slip very sharply on the human scale into an

inferiority complex. Their attitudes adjust to injustice. They also become “natural born pacifists.” They no longer exude an aura of “power and glory.” These types of people are inured to a world of abasement and indignity. They are used to mistreatment. They become comfortable with dishonor and abuse. The longer they stay in this “perpetual” state of misery the more it seems like this status quo seeps into their hearts and genes. Sometimes it appears as if they are instinctively third class. As hard as it may be to believe, even when this social attitude is delivered from that miserable milieu, it gravitates back to the same. Inferior individuals and crushed communities actually feel more “secure” in, and hence, will not easily part with their generational culture of serfdom and drudgery.

In comparing cultural Israeli servitude, which was imposed on them by a technically advanced, Egyptian materialistic society, with the nomadic culture of Arabia, where there was no elaborate power structure, no confining “system,” and no structured underclass of people, the qualitative edge would point in the favor of Arab cultural Semitism. The Hebrew Semites had to rid themselves of a slave-driving Egyptian culture, which they could not achieve even after they were liberated due to the relative failure of a psyche that seemingly felt at home in the domain of oppression. The Arab Semites, by contrast, had to rid themselves of a primitive nomadic culture, which they were partially able to achieve due to the relative success of a psyche that had not been interned by the institutional presence of oppression. In this ambience, Rasūl-Allah’s (ﷺ) hadith is relevant,

You and I are like a man who lights a fire, and when the fire illuminates its surrounding there are these flies and insects that are attracted to the fire and rush [into it, thereby being] burned in it, even though the man tried his best to defer these bugs from winging into the fire. It is me who is trying to deter you from the fire while you try to go into it.¹⁹¹

The sociological and psychological content of this saga of Banū Isrā’īl is that the Pharaohs of Egypt, with their injustice and

oppression, caused these Israelis to deteriorate away from the self-assured human created by Allah (ﷻ). They had lost their human quality and even their human value, as slavery is apt to do with humans. Their hearts and spirits were broken. In this climate and to treat the deep-rooted inferiority complex of Banū Isrā'īl, Allah (ﷻ) rescued them with His miracles, supernatural events, and power — something He had not demonstrated to others in the way He did with them. This should have been enough for them to pull out of their slave culture, their inferiority complex, and their loss of self-confidence.

In Moses and with Moses (ﷺ), they had a savior who delivered them from the power structure of Egypt, saved them from institutionalized enslavement, and relieved them of the torment and torture of everyday Egyptian life. Mūsá (ﷺ) brought them into freedom, independence, glory, and comfort. And still, anytime they felt hungry or exhausted, or were told to do something “demanding” they would turn their resentment on Mūsá (ﷺ). At times it looked like they were “fed up with him,” as they would remember their days back in Egypt, yearning to go back.

When Mūsá (ﷺ) left them for a number of days to make contact with Allah (ﷻ) they crafted a golden calf out of their gems and jewels, which were the dearest things to them. So they worshiped this dearest god! This is because their previous Egyptian culture, which was still an integral part of their identity, deified the calf, Apis.¹⁹² Of course, Allah (ﷻ) knew they could not reconcile themselves with an Israeli military force that was capable of marching into the land of giants (*jabbārīn*). Allah's (ﷻ) *sunan* (social laws) are always at work; they take no vacations. Hence, these social laws will work for the Israelis if they obey Allah (ﷻ) and they will work against these Israelis if they disobey Him. Allah (ﷻ) gave them the opportunity to wash away their Egyptian culture by mounting a military campaign; but they chose to “stick to their culture” and for that they incurred the appropriate and just sentence. For their “crime against God,” they would have to spend another generation's worth of time in the desert to purge themselves of their slave culture. A new generation would have to be born in the desert, in the

wilderness, and outside of a context of social engineering to feel free and thereby act with dignity and honor.

The Israelis were foretold of the potential consequences of their stubborn break with Moses (ﷺ), but they still went ahead and clung to their customs and culture in lieu of Allah (ﷻ) and His prophet, Mūsá (ﷺ). They, like all other people who part ways with God, should know that they do injustice to themselves; it is not God who is doing injustice to them. Allah (ﷻ) ordered the Children of Israel into the Holy Land to teach them that a military *sunnah* will offset a cultural *sunnah*. He showed them all those preceding miracles to give them confidence as they follow God and His guidance. They refused to go along and it took many years for them to redeem themselves from this terrible mistake.

This whole episode of Israeli intransigence and defiance has come full circle now. For purposes that will become more evident as the years go by, the Israelis from the time of Mūsá (ﷺ) have become the knock-down and drag-out power of today. The Israeli nation-state with its Zionist ideology behaves like a biblical bully. By employing its military supremacy and awe-inspiring power, it wants to impose on the Palestinian and Arab “other” the will to subjugate, humiliate, and dispense with any and all standards of human dignity. In this new chapter on the Holy Land, the Palestinian and Arab Muslims have been relocated into the position that the Mosaic Israelis were in. Now it is these Israelis, in the post-1948 Zionist nation-state with Tel Aviv as its capital, who are treating human beings no different than themselves (the Palestinians and Arabs) with the same ferocity and madness that they could not withstand during the time of Moses (ﷺ). Their test as God’s so-called “chosen” is not over, and hence it was only a matter of time for God to place these Israelis in two contradictory positions: inferior and oppressed during the time of Moses (ﷺ), superior and oppressive during our own time. And in both cases the Israelis have been on the wrong side in their relationship with this Holy Land. Remember, the Holy Land belongs to those who uphold, honor, and apprise their covenant with Allah (ﷻ). It does not belong to those who have “material” power as they have today; in the same

manner, it did not belong to those who had material power in the days of Moses (ﷺ). The whole object lesson and deterrent example is lost on those who have lost sight of Allah (ﷻ). One can have the most elaborate and advanced military in the world and not be entitled to the Holy Land; and by contrast one may have the most feeble and vulnerable military in the world but when he observes and fulfills his covenant with God, then he can become the legitimate occupant of the Holy Land.

These words are being inked at a time when the Israeli Zionists may think they have made their historical point. They may have the chutzpah to say to Providence, “Look at us, now! We were once in the position that these Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims are in today, and we failed to go into the Holy Land as You ordered us to do; but today, there are these others who claim to be “the best nation brought forward for humanity,” who are in the same position we were in thousands of years ago, and what are they doing, how are they behaving, and by what means are they responding to You?

Therefore, the onus is on the oppressed, dislocated, and militarily inferior Muslims of contemporary times to live up to Allah’s (ﷻ) command, and to succeed where the Israelis have failed, both yesterday and today. It can only be in Allah’s (ﷻ) wisdom that the same Israelis who were the underclass of thousands of years ago are now the giants, the leviathans, and the goliaths of today. It appears that there may be some time yet before these Israelis realize they could have won the war when God told them to go into the Holy Land millennia ago but they suffered a failure of nerve, a failure of mind, and a failure of muscle. Now, with their Zionist ideology as an exclusivist nation-state, they disqualify from being in the Holy Land. Despite all the media might, military technology, and “religious institutions” at their service, they are going to lose this war as they did before, because they have lost sight of God, again!

The Israeli Zionist Jews’ answers to some of the leading questions trailing them will determine either their redemption or condemnation, now as before. Why are you running away from scripture as exemplified by this Qur’an? Why are you avoiding public contact with sincere Muslims who have knowledge of the

Qur'an and Sunnah? Why are you hiding behind your military infrastructure, and in the process causing more Muslims to come to their senses to reverse the historical tragedy and the contemporary fallacy of an invincible Israeli nation-state?

Diaspora Is a Punishment for Rejecting God's Command

Before closing out the section, a few thoughts on the Jewish diaspora may be germane at this point. In Jewish history there is a sense that this dislocation of the Jewish people goes back to the end of the First Temple period. The concept of a diaspora arose after 722BCE, when Israel fell to Assyria; and 586BCE, when the Kingdom of Judah was conquered by Babylonia and many Jews were carried away into "exile" due to large-scale expulsions carried out by the Babylonians.¹⁹³ Jewish relocation in settlements outside the Holy Land acquired great importance at this time. Even with the restoration of Jerusalem (as the Judeo-Christian historical narrative has it) to the Jews under Ezra and Nehemiah after 539BCE, by the edict of Cyrus the Great, a diaspora community continued.¹⁹⁴ Jewish history says that a large number of the Jews in Babylon, perhaps a majority, did not avail themselves of the subsequent opportunity to return to Palestine, and even at the time of Jesus (ﷺ) many Jews remained in Mesopotamia, Egypt, Asia Minor, Syria, and had spread into Europe to Rome. They were also scattered, according to the Book of Esther, throughout the 127 provinces of the Persian Empire.¹⁹⁵ The Elephantine Papyri illustrate the vitality of the Jewish colony in Egypt in the 5th century BCE.¹⁹⁶ The great Greek city of Alexandria alone had one million Jewish residents.

The cultural unification of the entire East Mediterranean area through the conquests of Alexander the Great, as well as later deportations and colonizing movements, extended the area of Jewish settlement in exile. The groups in Egypt were of major significance and already in the 2nd century BCE extended westward into Cyrene.¹⁹⁷ To the north, Jews were to be found all over Syria and Asia Minor, and they penetrated into Greece, even as far as Rome in the same period.

Subsequently, the Roman conquest of Palestine brought the Jews into the Latin orbit. The Roman-Jewish War of 66–70CE ended in the destruction of the Jerusalem Temple and the Jewish state, and a new wave of Jews joined the diaspora community. Some Jews remained in Judah, now part of the Roman province of Syria, and under the messianic preaching of Simon bar Kokhba, these Jews revolted against Rome.¹⁹⁸ In response, the Romans decimated the Jews, sowed the site of Jerusalem with salt, and built a Roman city on Mt. Zion. From this point, until the forging of the Israeli nation-state in 1947, Judaism existed only as a diaspora. The diaspora settlements in what is now Italy became numerous, and others extended in the Roman imperial period all over Europe, as far west as Spain, into northern France and the Rhineland, and all across the coast of North Africa.¹⁹⁹

Diaspora Jewry spoke for the most part Greek and/or Latin; the fullest account of how they were organized may be found in the works of Salo Baron (in English) and Jean Juster (in French).²⁰⁰ Throughout the time of the diaspora dispersion in Europe, there remained a strong Jewish diaspora type of settlement in Babylonia (Iraq), which was united, after the rise and expansion of Islam, with the Greco-Roman or Mediterranean diaspora. In the course of the European Middle Ages, the diaspora became strong in northern and western Europe, reaching England. The persecutions and expulsions of the later Middle Ages brought its center of gravity to eastern Europe (Poland down to Turkey). The maritime “discoveries” caused it to move westward again and the Russian persecutions of the late-19th century made America one of its greatest centers, besides extending it to Australia, South Africa, etc. The Zionist movement inculcated a vital change in the Jewish attitude toward the diaspora. The Nazi persecutions helped to magnify the humanitarian plight of dislocated Jews for political reasons on the continent of Europe, thus increasing the relative importance of transoceanic communities. But at the same time, the improvisation of the Zionist Israeli nation-state and the “return” of three million Jews has gone a long way to modifying and even changing the conception of the Jewish diaspora; now to

many Jews the diaspora is no longer an “exile” (*golah*) but a voluntary decentralization (*tephutzot*).²⁰¹

For those who honor the “micro-responsibilities” of His covenant, such as keeping kosher and attending synagogue, while dishonoring the “macro-responsibilities” of the same covenant, such as fighting against injustice and consolidating into a military force, Allah (ﷻ) has decreed for these types of religious reductionists a geographical dislocation on earth — a diaspora. They become scattered members of a religious community separated from its “seat of nature.” The country they belong to is not theirs any longer and the country they are in does not accept them in the full sense of the word.

While Judaism is the classic example and model for a diaspora, it is by no means the only diaspora in history. Various sects of Christianity, Hinduism, Buddhism, and Shintoism are now scattered over the face of the earth. Muslims, themselves, now have no country of their own where the Islamic standard of morals and laws both reign supreme. The Muslims’ loss of Makkah and Madinah has rendered them to their own type of diaspora. While diaspora is a specifically religious concept, it is often concretely realized in historical, ethnic groups. The Scotch-Irish, for example, are a diaspora of Protestantism, settled in a Celtic, Roman Catholic land.²⁰² The European occupation of the “New World” in the 16th and following centuries made the Americas the destination of many diasporas. In time, New York City came to have the world’s greatest density of Jews.

The consciousness of being part of a diaspora runs deep in many religious traditions at various times. The early Christians, as they spread from Jerusalem and Antioch to Asia Minor and Greece and on to Rome, saw themselves in terms of a scattered family of God dwelling in countries that were not really their homes.²⁰³ St. Paul spoke of Christians as living colonies of heaven. For him, the home country was the Kingdom of God. During the period 33–312CE, while Christianity was spreading throughout the Roman Empire, this diaspora awareness was strong. After Constantine the Great rescinded the legal impediments Christianity had suffered, the Church gradually became established, and the diaspora feeling

among many faded away. It was still present, however, in *The City of God*, a famous philosophy of history written by St. Augustine of Hippo, in which the city of God (the Catholic Church) was contrasted with the city of man (the empire).²⁰⁴

A key notion in the concept of diaspora is that the scattered believers remain in contact with the official leaders of the religious body. During the time after the return of the Jews to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the Second Temple under the preaching and leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the Jews in other countries came to Jerusalem at Passover and regularly paid a Temple tax.²⁰⁵ This custom, seen in the life of St. Paul, is recounted in the Acts of the Apostles. According to the “up-and-down” historical record of the Judeo-Christian milieu, Sts. Paul and Augustine, and Christians in general remained in touch with their true king, Jesus Christ (ﷺ), through prayer and the sacraments, especially the Eucharist.²⁰⁶

Almost every religion or sect exists as a minority in many lands, although it may form a majority in one country or other geographical region. While there are millions of Hindus in India, they form small minorities in North and South America, and larger minorities in many African countries. The same is true of Buddhists and Confucianists, especially among the millions of ethnic Chinese scattered all over Southeast Asia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Hawaii, Canada, and the United States. More recently, Koreans and Vietnamese have joined such a diaspora.

After the outbreak of hostilities between Catholics and Protestants following the Protestant Reformation, the concept of diaspora was used for Catholic minorities living in Protestant territories and for Protestant minorities living in Catholic lands. Gradually, most German states and cities became predominantly Catholic or Protestant, and dissenters were encouraged or forced to move away.

Although Christianity, as a whole, is no longer conscious of being a diaspora faith, and despite the era of warm ecumenical cooperation, Christianity, worldwide, is becoming more and more of a minority. The contrast between Christianity and Judaism serves to highlight the awareness of diaspora or the lack thereof. A salient

feature of Judaism is its emphasis on God's law that requires humans (Jews) and a territory (the Holy Land) to become a divine jurisdiction for the fulfilment of the divinely defined relationship between man and God. Therefore, when this relationship comes apart, as it did in human history, the Jews felt a diaspora and still feel a diaspora if they are keenly aware of their Jewishness, if they are not what is called today "secular Jews," and if they have not been pulled into the false presumptions of Zionism. On the other hand, Christians have been so "spiritual" about their understanding of Jesus (ﷺ) that they reached a point in their church history whereby a believer could simultaneously be a "moral Christian" and an "immoral national" of whatever type. Thus a Christian could be a religious Catholic and a capitalist American, or a religious Eastern Orthodox and a communist Russian, or a Protestant German and a faithful Nazi, etc. This inversion of religion into the civil character of society gradually, throughout hundreds of years, led to the shedding of any practical meaning in man's relationship with God. Hence, the Christian functional attachment to God ceased to exist, and therefore, it became meaningless to have a diaspora.

All of this historical backdrop runs its course until it ultimately winds up in our world today, where there is a competition of wills between Muslims and Jews to rid themselves of this diaspora. The Jews, or most of them it appears, have found a full or at least a partial answer in the State of Zionist Israel — a state that stands for breaking all the commandments, annulling all the covenant, and adulterating all the conviction of Judaism, as even principled Jews understand it. The "Jewish" rush unto Zion today represents a false respite that will inevitably precede the violent reaction to the cumulative act of infamy engineered by today's Israel-centered Zionist Jews.

On the other hand, there are the somnambulant Muslims who are just beginning to wake up to the fact that they are living in their own diaspora. Islamic movements are galvanizing to regain the organic relationship between revealed values and scriptural standards. The sheer number of Muslims will abbreviate their diaspora time-duration as their masses will mature to the fact that it is their

divine duty to reintegrate Makkah, Madinah, and al-Quds (Jerusalem) into an Islamic jurisdiction where Muslims are finally at home — without malice, without prejudice, and without injustice.

The essential difference between Jews and Muslims is the fact that Jews are not willing to respond to God when they are called on to sacrifice their lives and the most precious material things they possess for abstract concepts such as liberty, independence, freedom, and self-determination. They would rather enjoy their gourmet food, their market profits, and their class status. In contrast, the Muslims, as they demonstrated in Badr and other military encounters are willing to forego those exact things the Jews are keen on having. They do so for the purpose of obeying Allah (ﷻ) — whatever the circumstances and however the outcomes are determined. They said to Allah's Prophet (ﷺ), "We will not say to you what the Children of Israel said to Mūsá (ﷺ); rather we say, 'Go, you and your Sustainer and fight, for, indeed, we will be fighting along with you.'"²⁰⁷

The Israeli Penchant for Bloodshed

- (5:27) And convey unto them, setting forth the truth, the story of the two sons of Adam — how each offered a sacrifice, and it was accepted from one of them whereas it was not accepted from the other. [And Cain] said, “I will surely kill you!” [Abel] replied, “Behold, Allah accepts only from those who are conscious of His power presence [in human affairs].
- (5:28) “Even if you lay your hand on me to kill me, I shall not lay my hand on you to kill you: behold, I fear Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds.
- (5:29) “I am willing, indeed, for you to bear [the burden of] all the sins ever done by me as well as of the sin done by you, [but] then you would be destined for the Fire, since that is the requital of evildoers!”
- (5:30) But the other’s passion drove him to killing his brother; and he killed him: and thus he became one of the lost.
- (5:31) Thereupon Allah sent forth a raven that scratched the earth, to show him how he might conceal the nakedness of his brother’s body. [And Cain] cried out, “Oh, woe is me! Am I then too weak to do what this raven did, and to conceal the nakedness of my brother’s body?” And was thereupon smitten with remorse.
- (5:32) Because of this did We ordain unto the Children of Israel that if anyone kills a human being — unless it be [in punishment] for murder or for spreading corruption on earth — it shall be as though he had killed all mankind; whereas, if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind. And, indeed, there came unto them Our apostles with all evidence of the truth: yet, behold, notwithstanding all this, many of them go on committing all manner of excesses on earth.
- (5:33) It is but a just recompense for those who make war on Allah and His Apostle, and endeavor to spread corruption on earth, that they are being killed in great numbers, or crucified in great numbers, or have, in result of their perverse-

وَأَتْلُ عَلَيْهِمْ نَبَأَ ابْنَيْ آدَمَ بِالْحَقِّ إِذْ قَرَّبَا قُرْبَانًا فَتُقْبِلُ مِنْ أَحَدِهِمَا
 وَلَمْ يُقْبَلْ مِنَ الْآخَرِ قَالَ لَأَقْتُلَنَّكَ ۗ قَالَ إِنَّمَا يَتَقَبَّلُ اللَّهُ مِنَ الْمُتَّقِينَ
 ﴿٢٧﴾ لَئِن بَسَطَ إِلَى يَدِكَ لِتُقْتَلَنِي مَا أَنَا بِبَاسِطٍ يَدِيَ إِلَيْكَ لِأَقْتُلَنَّكَ
 إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ ﴿٢٨﴾ إِنِّي أُرِيدُ أَنْ تَبُوءَ بِإِثْمِي وَإِثْمِكَ
 فَتَكُونَ مِنَ أَصْحَابِ النَّارِ ۗ وَذَلِكَ جَزَاءُ الظَّالِمِينَ ﴿٢٩﴾ فَطَوَّعَتْ لَهُ
 نَفْسُهُ، قَتَلَ أَخِيهِ فَقَتَلَهُ، فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ الخَاسِرِينَ ﴿٣٠﴾ فَبَعَثَ اللَّهُ
 غُرَابًا يَبْحَثُ فِي الْأَرْضِ لِيُرِيَهُ، كَيْفَ يُورِي سَوْءَةَ أَخِيهِ قَالَ
 يُنْوِيْلَتِي أَعْجَزْتُ أَنْ أَكُونَ مِثْلَ هَذَا الْغُرَابِ فَأُورِي سَوْءَةَ أَخِي ۗ
 فَأَصْبَحَ مِنَ التَّائِبِينَ ﴿٣١﴾ مِنْ أَجْلِ ذَلِكَ كَتَبْنَا عَلَى بَنِي
 إِسْرَائِيلَ أَنَّهُ، مَنْ قَتَلَ نَفْسًا بِغَيْرِ نَفْسٍ أَوْ فَسَادٍ فِي الْأَرْضِ
 فَكَأَنَّمَا قَتَلَ النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا وَمَنْ أَحْيَاهَا فَكَأَنَّمَا أَحْيَا
 النَّاسَ جَمِيعًا ۗ وَلَقَدْ جَاءَتْهُمْ رُسُلُنَا بِالْبَيِّنَاتِ ثُمَّ إِنَّ كَثِيرًا
 مِنْهُمْ بَعَدَ ذَلِكَ فِي الْأَرْضِ لَمُسْرِفُونَ ﴿٣٢﴾ إِنَّمَا جَزَاءُ
 الَّذِينَ يُحَارِبُونَ اللَّهَ وَرَسُولَهُ، وَيَسْعَوْنَ فِي الْأَرْضِ فَسَادًا أَنْ يُقَتَّلُوا
 أَوْ يُصَلَّبُوا أَوْ تُقَطَّعَ أَيْدِيهِمْ وَأَرْجُلُهُمْ مِّنْ خَلْفٍ أَوْ

يُنْفَوْا مِنَ الْأَرْضِ ذَلِكَ لَهُمْ خِزْيٌ فِي الدُّنْيَا وَلَهُمْ فِي
الْآخِرَةِ عَذَابٌ عَظِيمٌ ﴿٣٣﴾ إِلَّا الَّذِينَ تَابُوا مِنْ قَبْلِ أَنْ تَقْدِرُوا
عَلَيْهِمْ فَأَعْلَمُوا أَنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٤﴾ يَا أَيُّهَا الَّذِينَ
ءَامَنُوا اتَّقُوا اللَّهَ وَابْتَغُوا إِلَيْهِ الْوَسِيلَةَ وَجَاهِدُوا فِي سَبِيلِهِ
لَعَلَّكُمْ تُفْلِحُونَ ﴿٣٥﴾ إِنَّ الَّذِينَ كَفَرُوا لَوَآتَتْ لَهُمْ مَا فِي
الْأَرْضِ جَمِيعًا وَمِثْلَهُ مَعَهُ لِيَفْتَدُوا بِهِ مِنْ عَذَابِ يَوْمِ الْقِيَامَةِ مَا
نُقِيلَ مِنْهُمْ وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ أَلِيمٌ ﴿٣٦﴾ يُرِيدُونَ أَنْ يُخْرِجُوا مِنَ النَّارِ
وَمَا هُمْ بِمُخْرِجِينَ مِنْهَا وَلَهُمْ عَذَابٌ مُّقِيمٌ ﴿٣٧﴾ وَالسَّارِقُ
وَالسَّارِقَةُ فَاقْطَعُوا أَيْدِيَهُمَا جِزَاءً بِمَا كَسَبَا نَكَالًا مِنَ اللَّهِ وَاللَّهُ
عَزِيزٌ حَكِيمٌ ﴿٣٨﴾ فَمَنْ تَابَ مِنْ بَعْدِ ظُلْمِهِ وَأَصْلَحَ فَإِنَّ اللَّهَ
يَتُوبُ عَلَيْهِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ غَفُورٌ رَحِيمٌ ﴿٣٩﴾ أَلَمْ تَعْلَمْ أَنَّ اللَّهَ لَهُ مُلْكُ
السَّمَوَاتِ وَالْأَرْضِ يُعَذِّبُ مَنْ يَشَاءُ وَيَغْفِرُ لِمَنْ يَشَاءُ وَاللَّهُ عَلَىٰ
كُلِّ شَيْءٍ قَدِيرٌ ﴿٤٠﴾

ness, their hands and feet cut off in great numbers, or are being [entirely] banished from [the face of] the earth; such is their ignominy in this world. But in the life to come [yet more] awesome suffering awaits them,

- (5:34) Save for such [of them] as repent, before you [O committed Muslims] become more powerful than them: for you must know that Allah is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (5:35) O you who are committed [to Allah]! Remain on guard concerning Allah's power presence in your lives, and seek to come closer to Him, and strive hard in His cause, so that you might be successful.
- (5:36) Verily, if those who are bent on denying the truth had all that is on earth, and twice as much, to offer as ransom from suffering on the Day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from them: for grievous suffering awaits them;
- (5:37) They will wish to come out of the Fire, but they shall not come out of it; and long-lasting suffering awaits them.
- (5:38) Now as for the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off the hand of either of them in requital for what they have wrought, as a deterrent ordained by Allah: for Allah is almighty, wise.
- (5:39) But as for him who repents after having thus done wrong, and makes amends, behold, Allah will accept his repentance: verily, Allah is much-forgiving, a dispenser of grace.
- (5:40) Do you not know that Allah's is the dominion over the heavens and the earth? He chastises whom He wills, and He forgives whom He wills, for Allah has the power to will anything (al-Mā'idah: 27–40).

This lesson makes a transition from what was a military responsibility placed on the conscience of the Children of Israel during the time of Moses (ﷺ) to the incident in history when force was used by one brother against his sibling, resulting in the latter brother's death. The Children of Israel, who in today's world have had over 1,400 years to think about the profound meanings of this Qur'an, still have not done so; and if they have, they have certainly been discreet about it. This Qur'an informs all who wish to be guided that the Israelis in the time of Mūsá (ﷺ) were judged unacceptable, insubordinate, and self-destructive because they refused to obey

God in His instruction to take on the *jabbārīn*. Now the *āyāt* to follow will reinforce the lesson that people committed to Allah (ﷻ) cannot afford to stand by and look on as others abuse power and induce depravity on earth. Power in the wrong hands is a threat to people's lives and coexistence. This abuse of power is demonstrated by militaries and by petty thieves.

The ambiance of this lesson relates to the fact that the Yahūd of Madinah, because of acerbity and envy, would not concede the authenticity and legitimacy of Muhammad (ﷺ). These Yahūdī feelings of rancor and resentment developed into a campaign of hostility and animosity toward Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Qur'an. Perhaps because of the Yahūdī desire to "own" the Qur'an as their expectation was that all scripture should come to them or through them, they could not reconcile themselves to the fact that scripture had now been revealed to an Arab and a Semite (like them), but not to a Hebrew or an Israeli. The Qur'an, Allah's (ﷻ) factual statements, traces this grudging feeling all the way back to the genesis of human social life. The Yahūd, though, have amplified and concentrated this rapacity and selfishness. The *āyāt* here sooth the heart of the Prophet (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims; knowledge raises the tolerance level of what would otherwise be ignorant, zealous, and reactionary human beings. When all the information is presented, as it is done here, the Muslims can understand why the Yahūd chose to turn away from Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ).

It is important to look at the flow of these *āyāt*. In the previous lesson the central theme was about fighting for a region, a land, and a jurisdiction. Now, in this lesson, man is apprized of the significance and necessity of obtaining power and then using it to conform to Allah's (ﷻ) standards. The disciplined (scriptural) exercise of power is useful in the military sphere of human progress as well as in the social sphere of deterring crime. And in this utilization of power for the common good and common destiny there is an emphasis on the sanctity of human life. The divine sanctioning of military wars for a just cause and the elimination of oppression, as well as the divine approval of capital punishment or stern penalties, as with theft, may sound barbaric or unsightly; but in the

long run and within the larger picture they are meant to deter human instability and catastrophes. The words from Allah (ﷻ) ought to form the basis of our thoughts and ideas, and hence they assure us of the wisdom of such penalties and laws.

This lesson substantiates the notion that there is a deep-seated, inherent aptitude in man to aggress against his fellow man. Man, void of Allah (ﷻ), is tempted to attack and kill. This was demonstrated at the genesis of human history, on a small scale, by the two sons of Ādam (ﷺ). Man has been given the option of choosing what to do; and as such he may choose to do the wrong thing, even going to the extent of taking an innocent life. The human will is, in a sense, an extension of human knowledge or even man's speculative knowledge. And this, in and of itself, is a fraction of human acquisition — an acquisition of knowledge and experience that cannot be comprehensive and conclusive. Man, in the social currents of life, is always trying to do his best, trying for perfection, and in doing so he is liable to find fault with those he perceives as being relatively lesser in life. This humanly fabricated difference between one man and the other may be at the core of jealousy and avarice. From this psychological profile individuals and people begin to rationalize the killing of "others." They develop theories and ideologies that give them license to kill peoples and populations. But man-made ideologies cannot incorporate all the knowledge there is to produce such policies as world wars and genocide; because the more knowledge man has, the less likely he would be to commit crimes against humanity.

To diffuse the strains of emotions that "justify" aggression human beings are taught in scripture to acknowledge that they have different and fluctuating attitudes and aptitudes for accomplishments in sports, science, labor, art, etc. Even their interpretations of the same physical reality may differ. And therefore the effects of that subjective interpretation may vary from race to race, from time to time, and from land to land. If people can collectively acknowledge this variance and variety, then they can accept another's opinion, feelings, consciousness, and priorities. All of this is only achievable in an environment of morality that is built upon

God's guidance. Otherwise, humans will show themselves how capable they are of killing each other and destroying the quality of their God-given lives. It is at this point that mortal human beings need Allah's (ﷻ) words, His meanings, and His arrangement of their lives. In such a God-arranged life, killing and war are acts of justice. They are not done at the whims of dictators and thugs, even if they call themselves presidents and prime ministers. Eliminating human beings from society is done to repel *mafāsīd* (corruption and corrupting institutions) and to promote *maṣāliḥ* (the common good and common interest), **"...and had it not been for Allah causing people [populations] to push themselves along [through friction], the world would have lost substance..." (2:251).**

On the Matter of the First Murder

The theme that runs through this set of *āyāt* as well as the preceding one concerns the nature of the Children of Israel and their rejection of the covenant they had assumed with God. Hence, by virtue of its location, the narrative about Adam's (ﷻ) sons suggests a connection between that initial murder and the general temperament and constitution of Banū Isrā'īl. And so the lesson begins,

And [you, O Muhammad] express to them [the people of scripture — Jews and Christians — and all other people] the lead story [of Adam's two sons], stating the truth [for the record]... (5:27).

Anyone who takes a position of refusing to shelter his mind under the umbrella of truth that is the Qur'an has to be approached by all who claim to be followers of this Qur'an, the first of which is Muhammad (ﷺ). People who choose to remain outside the factual domain of this Qur'an need to know about the truth even though they themselves are bound to their religious shells, traditional conditioning, political casings, and layers of ignorance and prejudice. Societies and the non-Islamic public needs to be exposed to the truth pertaining to the knack for aggression and the desire to kill.

The contact of races, societies, and national entities has exposed the often deleterious characteristic that each of them carries a perception of preference to the “other,” which to some gives legitimacy to aggression in the form of conflicts and wars. These internal cultural and communal impulses are treated by divine morals and values, and then by divine laws and procedures so as to deter man from the vice and evil that comes to him from Satan.

The envy, exclusivism, and hostilities generated within the Yahūdī community against Muhammad (ﷺ) and the prototypical Muslim generation around him has to be viewed with this human emotional deviation in mind — a deviation that has its historical roots and depth. The genesis of the Yahūdī psychological invidiousness — their spite and resentment at seeing the success of “another” person who did not belong to their own culture and tradition — brings into focus their progenitors, the two sons of Ādam (ﷺ). In this early precursor to the Israeli racism cloaked in religion, one brother was incited by malice against his own brother. The end result was that Cain (Qābīl) killed Abel (Hābīl). This lesson concentrates on the consequences of this offensive and furious psychology, represented by a human being — a brother of all people — who openly manifested his vicious and iniquitous feelings with the commission of a crime.

The Islamic scholars of old in their majority share the view that the two sons of Ādam (ﷺ) mentioned here are his biological sons. However, according to Imam al-Ḥasan, these two sons were descendants of Ādam (ﷺ) — not his immediate offspring — who lived somewhere down the genealogical line that led to Banū Isrā'īl.²⁰⁸ According to the Book of Genesis, these two sons of Adam (ﷺ) were his first sons. In Judeo-Christian scriptural literature the first son, Cain the elder, referred to in Islamic history and *tafsīr* literature as Qābīl, was the murderer. The second brother's name was Abel, who in Islamic history has been called Hābīl.²⁰⁹ Much has been said about this early event in recorded human history. Authenticated and substantiated narratives from other prophets about these two brothers are not known to exist. Notwithstanding the paucity of information from those sources, people can

take comfort in the fact that this errorless Qur'an gives an airtight account about the two brothers. The very words in the Qur'an, "... **setting forth the truth [about the incident pertaining to these two brothers]...**" imply that there are many tales and stories about them. But it is only the Qur'an that offers a truthful narrative of the event, untainted by human interpretation or embellishment, "... **how each [brother] offered a forfeiture [ritual killing or an offering]...**" This simple and neutral human act was followed by aggression and a level of seething antagonism that incited its bearer to assault and finally murder.

Biblical history suggests that most of the time an offering or a sacrifice was in the form of a *dhabīḥah* (slaughtered animal). To some, sacrifice was akin to a cultic act giving tangible expression to a feeling of submission or dependence on a deity; to others, a sacrifice would be performed to obtain the deity's favor and atone for the sins of the sacrificer. It is said in Jewish literature that the Canaanites sacrificed human beings (the Cult of Moloch, see 2 Kings, 3:27), but with the story of the binding of Isaac by his father Abraham (سجدة), the Bible teaches God's displeasure with human sacrifices (Genesis, 22:1–24). To the ancient mind, a cult without sacrifice was unthinkable, but the Jews gave sacrificing a monotheistic tendency and concentrated it in the Jerusalem Temple. No animals were slaughtered except by sacrifice until the time of the code of Deuteronomy. The three types of sacrifice were animal sacrifice (*zebah*), meal offerings (*minha*), and libations (*nesekh*).

Any animal offered in a sacrifice had to be perfect and unblemished (Leviticus, 23:18). These were divided into the highest class of sacrifice (burnt offering, sin offering, guilt offering, congregational peace offering) and sacrifices of a minor grade (individual peace offerings, first-born, animal tithes, paschal lamb). The former category was slaughtered to the north of the altar and eaten by the priests inside the enclosures of the Temple court (except for the burnt offering, which was entirely consumed by fire); the latter group could be killed in any part of the Temple court and eaten by the sacrificer in any pure place in Jerusalem. Before offering any individual sacrifice, the sacrificer placed his

hands on the animal and confessed his sin or iniquity; hands were also placed on peace offerings, thank-offerings, and bird-offerings. After this ceremony the animal was slaughtered and its blood sprinkled on the altar. A contribution was given from these sacrifices to the priests. The sin offering of an individual and the sacrifice of a Nazirite had to be a female animal; a peace offering could be an animal of either sex.²¹⁰ Honey and leaven (for example, yeast) were forbidden with the sacrifice but leaven was allowed on the Feast of Weeks and with the thanksgiving sacrifice of the peace offering. Meal offerings, which were seasoned with salt, were divided into oven-baked oblations (religious offerings), griddle-baked oblations, and stewing-pan offerings (Leviticus, 2:4–7). There was also a first-fruit oblation (Leviticus, 2:14). Most of the offerings used oil and frankincense, the latter imparting a festive character.

An important category of sacrifice was the obligatory offering laid down in the Bible (Numbers, 28–29) to be offered on sabbaths and feasts. Other sacrifices were offered, in the Jewish tradition, on occasions of joy, sorrow, fulfillment of vows, or in thanks or repentance. The daily burnt offering was sacrificed in the morning and evening, and Nehemiah taxed the people in order to obtain an adequate supply for this sacrifice. Thank-offerings and festival sacrifices were offered when the people went to Jerusalem. The sacrifice of the burnt offering was made to the accompaniment of musical instruments and the levitical choir: two priests sounded the trumpets and the people bowed in worship.

Thus, in Judeo-Christian traditions as it were, sacrificial offerings were diverse rituals that enhanced relations between God and humanity. Originally motivated by the desire to acknowledge Yahweh's sovereignty with tribute, to influence Yahweh's actions with gifts, to strengthen divine-human communion, or to expiate human wrongdoing, people performed these "cultic" ceremonies to provide a vital continuity in divine-human intercourse. Though, strictly speaking, sacrifice in biblical Israel involved the slaughter or "burning" of an animal, meal and cereal offerings constituted significant accompaniments. The Israelis offered sacrifices to Yahweh throughout their history. Since sacrifice is virtually a universal reli-

gious phenomenon, biblical procedures often resemble those reflected in extra-biblical texts. Still, whatever the Israelis adopted from the surrounding cultures of Mesopotamia and Canaan was made to serve their own purposes.

Various historical and prophetic texts in the Old Testament reflect pre-exilic (before 586BCE) sacrificial undertakings. The Book of 1 Samuel (1:3) reports that Elkanah, Samuel's father, made annual sacrifices at Shiloh; the Book of Amos (4:4) reveals sacrificial frenzy at Bethel and Gilgal (central Palestine); and the Book of Psalms (56:12) mentions sacrificial vows made by the hard-pressed, pious Israeli.²¹¹ It appears that the clearest biblical statement regarding sacrificial offerings is found in the Book of Leviticus. Serving as a "memorandum" for priests, it offers directives when individual Israelis seek participation in sacrificial offerings (Leviticus, 1:1–6:7). This is supplemented by a section more specifically concerned with priestly leadership (Leviticus, 6:8–7:38). These verses are considered to be post-exilic legislation, but are traceable back to ritualistic prototypes that are much older.

Since sacrificial offerings incorporated self-evident procedures and symbols for the priestly editors of the Pentateuch (Torah), they felt no urge to systematize ritualistic details or to advance a specific theory of sacrifice justifying the existence of the sacrificial cult. While not definitive, biblical sacrifices are probably best classified according to their several functions: gifts, vehicles of communion with God, and mechanisms facilitating the expiation of sin and guilt.

The gift aspect of sacrificial offerings rests on the obvious consideration that they all involve the presentation of something to or before God. Two general Hebrew nouns for sacrifice, of which the first is *minha*, fundamentally convey the idea of gift. In its earliest biblical usage *minha* denotes sacrifices in general, though sometimes it relates to secular expressions of respect (for example, people to a king; 1 Samuel, 10:27) or common personal allegiance (for instance, Jacob to Esau; Genesis, 32:13). When the *minha* later acquired the sense of "cereal offering" (Exodus, 29:41), another noun, *qurban*, meaning *to bring near*, imparted the general notion of giving (Leviticus, 2:1).

The tributary offering of firstlings also falls into this category. It was commonly held that the firstborn of the herd and first fruits of the ground belong to the Lord; they must be delivered to Yahweh as sacred gifts (Exodus, 13:2; 23:19). This regulation did not apply to the firstborn child who was “redeemed” when a young animal served as suitable substitute (Exodus, 13:11–16). Accordingly, the God who activates animal and plant life is respectfully celebrated as worthy of a portion of that life. The claim of divine ownership is thankfully recognized (Deuteronomy, 26:1–11).

The cereal offering (*minha*) is another type of sacrificial gift (Leviticus, 2:1–16). Consisting of flour, cakes, or crushed grain, the *minha* is placed on the altar along with oil and frankincense. A portion, known as the *azkara* (meaning *reminiscence*), is burned. Stemming from the verb *zakara* (meaning *to remember*), this noun may suggest the actual function of the cereal offering, namely, bringing the worshiper to Yahweh’s own remembrance.

The burnt offering (commonly called an *ola*, though sometimes a *kalil*) is yet another sacrificial gift. It consisted of a bull, ram, goat, or dove (Leviticus, 1:1–17). Probably in order to designate it as his own gift, the offerer would lay his hand on the animal’s head. The animal was slaughtered, its blood was dashed at the altar’s base, and the carcass was cut into pieces and burned in its entirety. No sacramental eating was involved. Though an atoning dimension is ascribed to this sacrifice (Leviticus, 1:4), originally that was probably not the case. The Lord also refers to the *ola* as “My offering, my food for my offerings by fire, my pleasing odor...” (Numbers, 28:2). Whatever happened to be its ancient Mesopotamian or Palestinian antecedents, Israeli priests perceived this expression figuratively.

Since sacrificial gifts were basically motivated by the offerer’s gratitude, the votive (in fulfillment of a vow), thank, and freewill offering also merit mention. Precarious circumstances stimulated the pious to promise the Lord a votive sacrifice following personal deliverance (Jonah, 1:16). The thank offering was a similar expression of gratitude, though it entailed no previous vow (Psalms, 107:21–22). Finally, spontaneous thanksgiving is best denoted by

the freewill offering, which is not associated with any stringent regulations (Leviticus, 22:23).

Through the *shelem* sacrifice, worshipers were sacramentally linked with the Lord and one another. Since the Hebrew noun *shalom* means *peace*, *shelem* is often rendered as *peace offering*. The chief concern, however, is the establishment of full harmony between God and worshipers through a shared banquet. While the biblical legislation (Leviticus, 3:1–17) somewhat resembles that mandated for the burnt offering (*ola*), Yahweh's portion is limited to the poured out blood of the sacrificial animal, along with the fatty parts of the entrails and the kidneys, which are burned. The rest of the animal would be consumed in a communion meal joyfully eaten by both priests and laity in God's presence (Deuteronomy, 12:18). The same type of sacrifice is sometimes designated by the noun *zebah*, meaning *what is slaughtered* (Exodus, 18:12), and is indicative of an early Israeli period when domestic animals were slaughtered solely for the purpose of a meal in which God shared. With its vivid portrayal of one family banqueting in Yahweh's presence, the Old Testament highlights the communal aspect of Israeli sacrifice (1 Samuel, 1:1–28).

Whereas spontaneously motivated sacrifices are outlined in the Book of Leviticus (1:1–3:17), two mandatory sacrifices, the sin offering and guilt offering, are respectively portrayed there as well (Leviticus, 4:1–5:13; 5:14–6:7). Since the exact distinction between them is never stated, perhaps they constitute two independent, parallel atonement rituals. Both were emphasized during and after the Exile (586BCE), and both were designed to expiate “unwittingly” committed sinfulness (Leviticus, 4:2) that ruptures the individual's relation with God and threatens communal well-being. Such wrongdoing involved engagement in real but minor offenses that do not incur expulsion from the covenant community. No sacrificial remedy existed for presumptively deliberate sins like murder and apostasy.

Above all, the problem of continuing ritual impurity is addressed. Concerning the sin offering, only special portions of the sacrificial animal are destined for “the altar of burnt offering”

(Leviticus, 4:8–10). Most of the animal, now contaminated by the sin of the worshiper who placed his hand on it (Leviticus, 4:4), is burned in a clean place (Leviticus, 4:12). By sprinkling the blood on the horns of the altar, the officiating priest “makes atonement” (Leviticus, 4:20) for the individual offering the sacrifice. In addition to individual sin offerings, the Book of Leviticus contains legislation for an annual Day of Atonement, which provides the Israeli community a solemn occasion for returning to spiritual wholeness (Leviticus, 16:1–34). This ceremony distinctively uses a goat that symbolically receives, as the high priest lays his hands upon it, the nation’s transgressions, and is then driven into the wilderness of Azazel, probably a desert demon. Financial compensation, not animal sacrifice, is the central factor within the legislative procedures established for the guilt offering. Its place in any discussion of Israeli sacrificial offerings is admittedly peripheral.

Across the centuries, not all Israelis esteemed sacramental offerings identically. In popular thought, sacrifices were often regarded as wielding such automatic power as to render the worshiper’s inward involvement irrelevant; nonetheless, though, the religiously perceptive within Israel argued otherwise. The priesthood did not approach sacrifices mechanically. Although Yahweh favored Israel with an instrument for expiation, that is, with the sin offering, humble confession still constituted an intrinsic expectation (Leviticus, 5:5). Sacrifices were serious business to devout Israelis who continuously presented Yahweh with daily offerings of sacrificial beasts, grain, and wine libation (Numbers, 28:3–8). Indeed, sacrificial offerings were meant to instill reverence within the Israeli community. Rather than badgering Yahweh with new requests for benefits, the Israeli, in a thank offering, would recognize that benefits had already come from God. Going further, voicing a vow would place one under the moral obligation of enhancing one’s spirituality.

And thus in this overall tradition of sacrifice in the Jewish community in particular it appeared that Yahweh would not tolerate flagrant abuse of the sacrificial system. Samuel and Hosea respectively ranked obedience and steadfast love ahead of sacrifice

(1 Samuel, 15:22; Hosea, 6:6). Amos railed against the juxtaposition of external sacrificial observance and rampant social injustice (Amos, 5:21–24). Concern for the proper human attitude is echoed in the Book of Psalms (50:1–23), where thank and votive offerings are favorably regarded despite Yahweh’s disclosure, “I will accept no bull from your house.” Malachi’s rebuke of sacrificial negligence is a further reminder that Yahweh welcomes appropriately rendered offerings (Malachi, 1:6–14).²¹² Hence, sacrifices with the appropriate human attitude ensure the continuance of a positive relationship between God and the people. But the aphorism “The sacrifice of the wicked is an abomination” (Proverbs, 21:27) admonishes that the relationship between God and man is doomed should Israel become manipulative.

To enable the reader to get an understanding of what goes through the mind of religious Jews and Christians when it comes to the matter of ritual offerings and sacrifice, it was necessary to extensively describe their thinking and behavior in these areas. As the preceding *āyāt* clarify this whole concept, the tangled historical backdrop of the Judeo-Christian experience presents an opportune moment to return to the straightforward meanings that spring energetically from this life-giving Qur’an. Allah (ﷻ) is telling everyone who has an understanding about ritual offerings and sacrifice that the two sons or descendants of Adam (ﷺ) volunteered a ritual offer. That much said, the human mind will then want to know whether each one of them offered an independent gift to Allah (ﷻ) or they both shared in an offering of the same produce or sacrificial animal. That is to say, they both may have given of the same substance, but the quality of the one may have exceeded that of the other. For example, had the two brothers offered sheep, did one brother give a sheep of very good quality while the other gave an inferior sheep, perhaps one in bad health? The latter does not really represent the essence of “giving,” which is that a person gives the best of what he has out of sincerity, devotion, and altruism. The critical issue here is that a person should give back to Allah what Allah (ﷻ) has given him, to repay Him with the highest quality available.

At this point Allah (ﷻ) relates, as if He wants the reader to “skip over” unnecessary details, that He accepted the offering of one brother and not that of the other. He does not indicate how the two brothers knew of the acceptability of the one as opposed to the other. Once again the human mind wonders about how they came to understand the consequences of their acts. And one inconclusive answer could be that they knew about it via Allah’s (ﷻ) revelation to or inspiration of their father Adam (ﷺ).²¹³ In other tracts of Islamic literature it is said that one brother was a farmer who offered produce and the other a shepherd who offered livestock. The latter gave of the best sheep he had out of selflessness, openhandedness, and generosity. He gave his most lively, energetic, and healthy sheep to Allah (ﷻ), and he felt very good about it. But the farmer gave the worst portion of his produce — what appeared to be substandard fruits and vegetables — and giving even that, he felt very bad and deprived.²¹⁴

There is some *tafsīr* literature that speaks about the accepted offering being consumed by fire, while the unaccepted one was left alone. This is another obvious example of the creep of Israeli religious interpretations into Qur’anic literature. Some of the above concurs with what the Jews have in the Book of Genesis, and some does not. Whatever the actual case may be, this writer could not find any substantiation for this consumption by fire traceable to the Qur’an or the Sunnah.

And what was the answer of the selfless brother? **“Behold, Allah accepts from those who are conscious of His power presence.”** Allah’s (ﷻ) acceptance of human beings who are committed to Him and of human offerings is contingent upon man’s awareness of His immediate and uncontested power bearing in the social behavior of man. Whether it is the offering of a sheep or one’s own life as a sacrifice, Allah (ﷻ) will only accept that offering if it springs from *taqwá* — Allah’s (ﷻ) power cogency and comportment in the behavioral and social activities of man. In effect, the unselfish brother was telling his own brother that he had not wronged the latter in any manner such that he should merit the threat of being killed; furthermore, in the same vein, the former

was advising the latter that Allah's (ﷻ) refusal of his offering should have motivated him to conduct the depth of soul searching that would determine the reason for his obstruction from Allah (ﷻ), **“And know that Allah receives willingly those who are aware and alert to His possession of controlling influence.”** A person who is conscious of Allah's (ﷻ) unique energy and ability will become self-conscious of his personal inertia and inability.

Withholding from Allah (ﷻ) what Allah (ﷻ) has given selflessly — since Allah (ﷻ) is sufficient unto Himself — is another way of factoring in man's own ego and superimposing his own self on the majesty and the glory of Allah (ﷻ). This is an expression of *shirk*; man's notions of feigning generosity, withholding assets, and being consumed by selfish tendencies is a grievous mistake and a serious sin that turns away divine forgiveness. One can almost hear the magnanimous brother saying to his woeful sibling, “Down to the very essence of your being, be perceptive and apprehensive about Allah's (ﷻ) capacity to step into your personal and material world. You need to be open-hearted; show unselfish concern for the welfare of others. Your concern for the ‘other’ is proof of your discernment of Allah (ﷻ). My brother! You have to give of what is dear to you.” Another *āyah* in the Qur'an corroborates this counsel, **“You will never reach [the rank of] virtue until you dispense with what you enjoy...” (3:92).**

The sanctity of human life at its highest standard is the theme of these *āyāt*. In the mix is a brother who feels jealous, angry, and belligerent because he now feels “excluded” from God. He reaches the point of threatening to kill his own brother, who responds clearly, unequivocally, and specifically,

[Cain] said, “I will surely kill you!” [Abel] replied, “Behold, Allah accepts only from those who are conscious of His power presence [in human affairs]. Even if you extend your hand to kill me I am not extending my hand to kill you: behold, I fear Allah, the Sustainer of all the worlds” (5:27–28).

In the first instance, this demonstrates that people who are beneficent and human-centered are not going to reciprocate criminal conduct by counter-criminal behavior. Crime cannot be decreased or diminished by another crime. A person who is God-centered cannot find any excuse to gratuitously kill someone else, even if that someone else harbors festering feelings that may lead to murder and homicide. As the contradictory sets of feelings are juxtaposed, when the dishonorable brother expresses his intention to kill because he feels left out of Allah's (ﷻ) acceptance, then the honorable brother expresses his internal thoughts as well, **“Behold, I fear Allah, the Sustainer of the worlds.”** In a sense, he was saying, “I fear Him seeing me take steps toward a crime, I fear Him knowing of any internal shameful and blameworthy thoughts, and I fear Him condemning me for committing such a heinous crime.” Shedding blood without cause and justification is an unforgivable sin. Taking away someone else’s life when the motive is to assuage the ego, self-love, and self-importance is punishable by eternal damnation. And whoever fears and reveres Allah (ﷻ) would never do such a thing. These words from a God-fearing brother to a self-centered brother should have served the purpose of deterrence, but the latter’s anger and ire eclipsed all channels of common sense and rationality.

The nature of this dialogue between the two brothers implies that the threat was not executed on the spur of the moment. These words may have been exchanged in the course of weeks, months, or even years. That would explain why one brother sought to “disarm” his own brother so as to stop him from becoming a murderer. Further insight into this affair suggests that the threatened brother was on his guard, that he was in a protective mode, and that he took all precautions to defend himself in case his brother finally did the unthinkable — committing a murder. Therefore, it stands to reason that being vigilant, alert, and on guard against aggression is one thing, but launching into belligerent and murderous acts is another. Even though the scale of interaction is just of two brothers who would become the first case of murderer and victim in the world, the exchange itself and what can be drawn from it mirrors what

happens in the larger social dynamic. It is in this context that the Prophet's (ﷺ) hadith can be better understood,

“When two Muslims meet bearing arms and then one of them kills his companion both the killer and the killed are in the Fire.” Asked one [of those who was listening], “O Messenger of Allah! We [can understand] the killer’s [fate], but what is it with the victim [that he, too, goes to the Fire]? He said, “He [too] was intent on killing his [Muslim] companion.”²¹⁵

This confirms how precious human life is. All human beings are sacrosanct. Everyone has the right to life even though he may entertain criminal feelings and express criminal thoughts. At an early stage in human history there was simultaneously respect for the “other” and, by contrast, there was the urge to kill because of self-centeredness. This divergence is captured in the words of the God-centered brother, **“I am willing, indeed, for you to bear [the burden of] the sin of killing me as well as [other] sins done by you.”** This means that the potentially victimized brother was alerting his baleful brother to the fact that if he went ahead with the crime he was thinking about, then he would have to bear the offense of the murder as well as his other personal offenses and sins, one of which was the reason for the rejection of his offering — a sin that led to the whole situation to begin with.

Another understanding of this *āyah*, as related by Ibn ‘Abbās, is that the murderer on the Day of Accountability will wind up carrying the sins of the victim, which are equivalent to whatever the victim accrued in his own lifetime, because the act of murder denied him the rest of his life, and thus the opportunity to atone.²¹⁶ So the culprit, the killer, is encumbered with the sins of the victim’s lifetime. The rationale here is that whatever time would have been left of the victim’s life could have atoned for what had already lapsed of that same life, and the victim was denied that opportunity because of the murderer, and that is why the murderer carries those sins. **“Then you [the slayer] will be destined to the Fire, since**

that is the requital of evildoing offenders.” The killer’s self obsession, unsavoriness, and antagonism will cause him to wind up in the Fire in the final life.

After this back-and-forth between these two biological brothers and psychological opponents, which may have unfolded over a relatively extended period of time, the unthinkable finally happened, **“His self prodded him to kill his brother; and he killed him.”** Ibn ‘Abbās and Mujāhid understood the word *ṭawwa‘at* to mean *encouraged*. Here, it was translated as *prodded*. Others may say that the beginning of the *āyah* means *his self enticed him*, or *his self facilitated for him*, or *his self made splendid to him the killing of his brother* — all of which capture the fact that he reconciled himself to the intention and execution of murdering his own brother. What is actually being uncovered here with the use of these delicate and informative words is the fact that human nature can gradually be overcome with the consuming feeling of jealousy and a heightened pitch of madness until it is driven to kill. As it takes time to tame and domesticate wild animals, in an opposite direction it takes time to arouse and unleash the “killer instinct” in man. Man has the capability of falling under the influence of negative and destructive feelings. From the wording of the *āyah*, it appears that in man’s state of nature there is no natural inclination toward killing. Only after destructive and furious feelings take obsessive hold over a person, then he or a nation begins to “convince himself (or itself)” of such a hellish idea.

Because the Qur’an has chronicled the counsel of the victim verbatim, it can be assumed that the brother hearing the advice was thinking about what he heard. He may have been dissuaded for a while from killing his biological brother. The combination of a brother’s advice, with man’s abhorrence of murder, and his natural inclination away from bloodshed may all have worked their way through the culprit’s mind and heart. But ultimately to no avail. The feeling of envy and jealousy was so strong that the tempting self overcame the admonishing self. The internal struggle between “do it” and “do not do it” as this person was thinking of murder went on until the soul-destroying feeling of gall and rancor nudged

him to kill his sibling brother. This is what is meant by, **“But his monomania and craze drove him to killing his brother.”**

Another way of analyzing this is to say a person who feels excluded by Allah (ﷻ) and inferior to another man is driven to kill whomever that other man is. This is particularly so when “exclusion” and “inferiority” are tied together, as they are here. It does not take a psychoanalyst to confirm that “normal” human beings experience emotional difficulty, rational barriers, and proscribing social values that tend to prevent an act of murder from occurring. After a short period of time or a long period of time the man-killer subdues all these impediments and commits the unlawful, premeditated act of killing a brother or fellow human being. The transition from the abhorrence of manslaughter to the actual crime of homicide needs a type of tempering and conditioning. The word *ṭawwaʿat* is meant to apprise man that a prearranged and planned murder needs an internal passive acceptance and willingness to commit such a demonic crime. This means that the malevolent brother initially could not kill his reverent brother because he found it difficult to do so. His God-given nature would not support such a detestable misdeed. But the malignant feeling of spite and grudge gradually got the better of him. This crime was committed devoid of any logical consideration or rational appraisal of its inevitable consequences, **“...and thus he joined the losers.”** He lost the good life here and he lost the good life there, in the final abode. He lost his own self by succumbing to his ego, his false pride, and his conceit. He lost the person closest to him — his own selfless and God-fearing brother. He lost everything when he lost his relationship with Allah (ﷻ).

Banū Isrā'il: Murder, Inc.

After reading and understanding Allah's (ﷻ) *āyāt* as they take us back to the first chapter in history and deep into the basest enticements of man, we should come away with the realization that the urge to kill is something human society is going to have to manage. After reviewing this civics lesson, what ought to be evident is man's inescapable need for a code of justice and body of law that responds to such human aggression and acts of manslaughter, for a system that will discourage potential killers from becoming active killers, and for institutions that will guard innocent people from crimes, felonies, and misdemeanors. Man does not live in human jungles; he lives in human societies. These societies have to admonish and deter from civil wrongs and lawbreaking. A moral society fortified by its judicial and legal framework will deal with criminal acts of homicide with God's penalty. These words are precise, for in the final analysis, it is Allah's (ﷻ) penalty because He is the One who instructs man on how to go about protecting the society from vice. A crime should be associated with a punishment that corresponds to its magnitude. And a decent and law-abiding citizen in an Islamic state should also have a body of laws that preserves his innocence, state of nature, decency, and integrity. The good shall be made to flourish and the bad shall be made to perish; otherwise, what will dominate will be a human jungle, a social jungle, and the law of the jungle.

A good number of preceding pages went through long and arduous comments about the meanings of "sacrifice" in the Judeo-Christian belief system. That same body of literature contained some information about Judeo-Christian thoughts on Adam (ﷺ), Abel, and Cain. To reiterate, this was not done because the authenticity of such passages is convincing, or because they should be imparted any measure of unqualified credibility; rather, it had to be done because the Muslims should be very familiar with the thoughts of those people whose history, as distorted as it is, extends into these critical and defining events. The Qur'an does not mention any names in this episode; so it cannot be said with certainty that these *āyāt* are about the contiguous sons of Adam (ﷺ). More-

over, there are no consensual and mainstream hadiths that shed more light on these pivotal meanings, other than the following,

Not one life is taken with injustice except that a portion of the spilled blood rests on [the consciousness of] Adam's bygone son because he was the first to actuate [the act of] murder.²¹⁷

What is known for sure in this intriguing story is that this incident occurred very early in human history, that it was the first act of premeditated murder on record, and that the perpetrator did not know how to bury the corpse. The context of the lesson indicates that it is primarily but not exclusively addressed to the Children of Israel. Muhammad (ﷺ) was ordered to correlate the *āyāt* herein for Banū Isrā'īl as he was ordered to present them with the sequences (of *āyāt*) of the previous lesson pertaining to their responsibility of inhabiting as covenant bearers the Holy Land. If anyone is looking for the truth, then this is where it is to be found.

The *āyāt* mention two brothers who were in the act of offering Allah (ﷻ) from what they have. This should never be an area in which one begins to feel envy and enmity against another, much less his own brother. Both of them were in a position of pleasing Allah (ﷻ) and asking for His acceptance. A close reading of the Qur'an suggests that for some reason (the reason is not categorically stated) one offering was accepted and the other was turned down. The Qur'an here does not endorse or echo the particular narrative in the Judeo-Christian Bible of today. Nonetheless, what becomes clear from a keen reading of these *āyāt* is that the brother whose offering was accepted could not have solicited bad feelings from the other, all other things being in their God-given state of nature. There could have been no justifiable reason for one brother to feel provoked or angered by his sibling. The outward appeal for Allah's (ﷻ) acceptance should never have set off internal thoughts of murder. A psychologically healthy human being would never contemplate such a crime in such a setting of servitude and obedience to Allah (ﷻ).

But then despite all pleas and remonstrances to the contrary, the first act of human homicide eventually took place. And at this

point, the perpetrator, looking at a lifeless body — a corpse — began to experience the shame of what he had done. The crime's anti-climax was nothing more than an unresponsive cadaver that would have been the object of bugs, maggots, and scavengers. This is an ambiance of "moral nakedness," something that is hard to come to grips with. And so,

Allah sent forth a raven that scratched the earth, to show him how he might conceal the nakedness of his brother's body. And he cried out, "Oh, woe is me! Am I then too weak to do what this raven did, and to conceal the nakedness of my brother's body?" And was thereupon smitten with remorse (5:31).

This raven may have been with another dead raven or it may have come upon a dead raven — whatever the peculiar details are do not matter at this point.²¹⁸ The moral lesson here concerns the murderer's inability to act by instinct in the way the bird did to bury another bird. This is when the murderer realized how trivial he really is: he had to be taught by a raven about how to bury his exposed dead brother. The raven may be a type of bird that buries its dead; or this may have been a bird inspired to bury another bird at that time and place to teach man what to do when a person expires. Sometimes the instinct in nature can teach the mind in man. Here it could be inferred that this was the first burial in man's history, or that the murderer himself had never seen a burial and thus did not know what to do with a lifeless body. It also appears that his remorse was not followed by repentance; this may mean that he regretted not having benefitted from his brother's death because of the uneasiness, suffering, and weariness that followed.

Because of this inclination in man's behavior, because of this grudge in man's psychology, because of this aggression in man's society, and because of this injustice in human life —

Because of this did We ordain unto the Children of Israel that if anyone kills a human being — unless it

be [in punishment] for murder or for spreading corruption on earth — it shall be as though he had killed all mankind; whereas, if anyone saves a life, it shall be as though he had saved the lives of all mankind. And, indeed, there came unto them Our apostles with all evidence of the truth: yet, behold, notwithstanding all this, many of them go on committing all manner of excesses on earth (5:32).

People have to face facts; as much as they object to witnessing the loss of innocent human life, it is precisely because of such loss that counter-aggression and counter-murder consumes lives in payback. There are those people in human society who plan, calculate, and execute acts of aggression and warfare that reduce to ashes the lives of unoffending persons, simple societies, and unsuspecting populations. The undercurrent of emotions and feelings that caused the first murder on earth are still the same ones that cause other murders on earth and at many times the scale. How many countries have been unnecessarily attacked and their masses killed in our own generation? Hundreds of them. Forces and militaries that are selfish and powerful do not resist the urge to kill, kill, and then kill some more. No amount of legal claims and verbal pleas will deter forces of aggression and people of prejudice from their murderous rampages, and so **“Because of this did We ordain unto the Children of Israel that if anyone kills a human being... it shall be as though he had killed all humanity...”** Killing someone in the manner described above is a cardinal sin, an unforgivable crime, and something that deserves zero tolerance. Killing one innocent person is like killing all humankind. Therefore, all moral and legal endeavors to root out the act of murder from society and to preserve human life is tantamount to saving the human race. This legal principle is included in the laws that were revealed from heaven to the Children of Israel.

If only the voices and pens could stop at this moment and listen to this Qur’an: killing (even) one human life, unless it is for punishment or to put an end to a corrupting power on earth, is the

equivalent of exterminating all the inhabitants on earth. Each life is the equivalent of another life, and the right to life is a right of every living being. Terminating one life is proportional to asphyxiating the right to live and the right to life. This right to life is shared by all living human beings. Similarly, preventing murder is like preventing genocide. The proscription of murder is achieved through moral and legal work that makes it difficult for a person to convince himself of the gain from such a destructive act; prevention is also achieved by the deterrence that accrues from inflicting the due penalty upon those who are guilty of the crime of first-degree murder. This becomes another way of expressing how sanctified human life is. These are the standards of an Islamic society living within an Islamic sanctuary and protected by an Islamic state that implements an Islamic system. These standards are meant to apply to all inhabitants of the Islamic state, regardless of whether they are Muslims or non-Muslims.

In other places in the world where there are no Islamic morals and laws, the only hope is for the key decision makers to respect human life in its generic form. Unfortunately, they do not. That is why their laws mean one thing to a majority and another thing to a minority. Their laws are selectively applied to one race and exempted from the other. Even class plays a role in the value and worth of human life. There is no need to go any further than the facts of life around us. In Brazil, there are policemen and others who go about the streets and slums of Rio de Janeiro and kill homeless and parentless children. They say they are relieving them of the misery they are in! Minorities in such countries as France and America are treated as if their lives are meaningless and disposable! The untouchables in India can be killed with impunity because they — in the eyes of Hindu India — virtually do not belong to the human race!

The Universal Declaration of Human Rights is a charter of civil and political rights drawn up by the United Nations in 1948.²¹⁹ It endorses the right to life, liberty, education, and equality before the law; to freedom of movement, religion, association, land information; and to a nationality. Under the European Convention

of Human Rights (1950), the Council of Europe established the European Commission of Human Rights (headquartered in Strasbourg, France), which is supposed to investigate complaints by states or individuals, and its findings are examined by the European Court of Human Rights (established 1959), whose “compulsory” jurisdiction has been recognized by a number of states. Yet despite all this moralistic preening and self-righteous window-dressing, or perhaps because of it, the world stands by as killing, murdering, ethnic cleansing, and genocide have become the hallmark of our times. The right to life nowadays needs the covenant-bearing and committed Muslims who can put into practice, at least in lands they are responsible for, the morals and the values as well as the legal system that will honor human life, protect human life, and nurture human life.

At the inception of this historical law the Children of Israel were responsible for maintaining it and seeing to it that it is not only ink on paper but a will on earth. At that time, the Children of Israel were in one sense or another people of scripture. They were the representatives of a society obedient and subordinate to God. Therefore, their legal territory may be referred to as the domain of God’s law, so long as they upheld the Torah, socialized the Torah, and honored the word and spirit of the Torah. Obviously, this excludes all their “shortcuts” and tampering with the meanings in the Torah. But as is their disposition, the Children of Israel veered away from the Torah and its legal and social reach. And they went off course after they were shown what to do and how to go about doing it by prophets and apostles (ﷺ). The Qur’an has registered all their deviations and delinquencies. Even when Muhammad (ﷺ) was dispatched with the Qur’an so that everyone could return to the straight path to Allah (ﷻ) and so that they could learn where they went wrong, they still refused to amend their ways,

And, indeed, there came to them [the Children of Israel] Our apostles with all evidence of the truth: yet notice, notwithstanding all this, many of them go on committing all manner of excesses on earth (5:32).

It is possible that because of the reference here to the Children of Israel, Imam al-Ḥasan said the two brothers, the sons of Adam (ﷺ), were Israelis or from the Children of Israel.

Considering more expansively the grudge and resentment that is strong enough to account for generic feelings of hostility, there is a parallel here between the relationship of the two brothers, the sons of Adam (ﷺ), and the relationship of the two Semitic brothers represented by the Jews of Arabia and the Arabs of Arabia. It seems like there is a symmetry between the way the murderer felt toward his brother and the way the Yahūd of Arabia felt toward Muhammad (ﷺ). There may still be extant feelings of resentment, rancor, and rage within the Yahūdī community because Allah (ﷻ) accepted the sacrifices of Muhammad (ﷺ) and the Islamic community but no longer accepted the Yahūd and the Yahūdī community, as they rejected Allah's final Prophet (ﷺ) and the divine message he carried. The internalized feelings of a murderer may have taken their shape in the psychology of the Yahūd to justify fresh rounds of contemporary killing, murder, and mayhem that are all but continuous and unrelenting. This psychological breakdown is also demonstrated in the fact that the Yahūd are responsible for killing Prophets (ﷺ).

How deep these feelings of rage and hostility run within the religious Jewish community of today toward the Muslims cannot be pinpointed with certainty. However, judging by what is happening on a daily basis in and around the occupied Holy Land, what is established beyond any doubt is that the Zionist Jewish killers are in the best image and the best tradition of that original murderer who convinced his own self to kill his blood brother. The institutionalized killing of Palestinians, Arabs, and Muslims may be traced to the aforementioned deep-seated combination of exclusion (by God) and inferiority that the Zionist Jews feel when it comes to committed Muslims. They, too, seem to have drilled and conditioned themselves to kill, as killing does not come naturally to man. And now they have spent a good half century exercising the "spirit of Cain" and then taking it to the level of mass murder. No other explanation can account for the bigotry and hatred that keeps on slaughtering Muslims without sorrow and self-reproach.

On the other hand, we Muslims are not expected to stand by and become willing victims of this Zionist bloodbath. Many things have happened since the dawn of history. And the most important thing is that Muslims have a responsibility and a duty to carry on with Allah's (ﷻ) commandments, to uphold His covenant, and to honor their commitment to Him. They can do this by looking through the experience and knowledge that comes from this Qur'anic covenant. And in it, justice is central and unavoidable.

As the lessons to follow tell us, we cannot stand by and see petty criminals as well as war criminals committing in a systematic way acts of mass murder and then make believe we do not have this Qur'an to tell us what to do. We do have this Qur'an; and in it we have the answer to a prime minister, or a king, or a religious scholar who wants to justify a century of murderous policies against Muslims, who are persecuted for no reason other than they are Muslims wanting to honor Allah (ﷻ) as the Lawmaker and the Lawgiver. And in doing so we Muslims are not excluding anyone; to the contrary, here as elsewhere in the Qur'an, all people of good faith, all people of scripture, and all people of common sense are summoned to help out with this worldly project that is supervised from heaven above. How many times are Muslims heard saying, "*Yā ahl al-kitāb...: O People of Scripture, O People of the Book, O People of the Bible*"? When we become targets of aggression and victims of warfare, we will fight back and we will do so honoring our covenant with Allah (ﷻ) and abiding by the holy instructions therein.

Deterrence in Islam versus Deterrence in the Imperial West

It is but a just redress for those who make war on Allah and His apostle, and endeavor to fan out corruption on earth, that they are being killed in great numbers, or crucified in great numbers, or have, in result of their perverseness, their hands and feet cut off in great numbers, or are being [entirely] banished from [the face of] the earth; such is their ignominy in this

world. But in the life to come [yet more] awesome suffering awaits them. Save for such [of them] as repent, before you [O committed Muslims] become more powerful than they: for you must know that Allah is much-forgiving, merciful (5:33–34).

Needless to say, this *āyah* emphatically renders a serious punishment to those who have committed a serious crime. In the divine words of the Qur'an, this abysmal crime is about "...waging war on Allah and His Messenger." One understanding of this declaration of war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) is to break with the Islamic leader and leadership who jointly observe Allah (ﷻ) in their moral character and in their legal functions. This becomes a grave and unforgiveable crime. Gangs and bandits who carry arms and shoot to kill against a popular and principled Islamic order with its established Qur'anic rules and Islamic practices can only expect the harshest punishment in the Book. A change in leadership or of those making decisions on behalf of the people is permitted in an Islamic society via the popular conscience, but not via a military coup d'état, nor an insurgency that targets the security and well-being of a consensual Islamic government. The security and the survival of a harmoniously consolidated Islamic social order cannot accept or tolerate recusants who declare a violent break with a majority Islamic population that is represented by an Islamic leadership, both of whom meet the standards and fulfill the obligations of the Qur'an and the Sunnah. Simply stated, Allah's (ﷻ) peaceful program for human societies does not countenance a "terrorist" or refractory clique that wants to jump over the consolidated conscience of the Muslim public and coerce with threats and violence anyone in its way to grabbing power. Lives, possessions, and moral order are sacrosanct in an Islamic society with an Islamic leadership.

Hordes and paramilitary outfits who violently attack a form of government that is solidly grounded in the Qur'an and Sunnah, who in the process kill innocent Muslims and citizens of a genuine Islamic authority — be they Jews, Christians, or legal residents of another religious conviction — are not at war with the Imam

(chief executive of the Islamic state) exclusively, or even the people; rather they are at war with Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostle (ﷺ). The fact of the matter is that violent and bloody opposition to a well-grounded and strongly consolidated Islamic society is an expression of warfare against the morals and the laws of this Islamic society, which go together. Such mutinous behavior violates the sanctity of the Ummah and the sphere of its Imam. This amounts to a real act of war that needs to be addressed commensurate to its danger and chauvinism.

While it may be true that these types of agitators and recalcitrants are physically at war with an Islamic society and an Islamic leadership, in actual fact they are at war with Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), who are the inspiration and the objective of the Islamic society and its governing body. It goes without saying that such restive insubordinates are not tangibly and physically in confrontation with Allah (ﷻ). They cannot aim their weapons at Him and they cannot bleed Him. And now that Muhammad (ﷺ) is in the presence of heavenly company, they cannot physically take him on either. But the war of these seditious fomenters is being waged in a strategic sense against Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) when they seek to defeat the Shari'ah by killing those who represent it.

Another way of understanding this *āyah* is that it is only an Islamic authority that is solidly Qur'anic and prophetic, hence no other temporal authority is authorized to inflict this type of punishment upon those who violently and aggressively oppose it. The types of governments existing today in Muslim countries and territories do not qualify to apply such harsh measures because they neither meet the standards nor the definition of being Islamic authorities.

To reiterate the context of this *āyah*, Allah (ﷻ) is speaking about an Islamic government coupled with an Islamic population, both of whom honor their Islamic rights and duties. And it is this Islamic society that has to weather a challenge from a band of mischief-makers who advocate "armed struggle" or an insurgency of sorts against the dominant Islamic way of life around. This *āyah* cannot be wrenched away from this overall context and then used as an excuse or a pretext for *jāhili* governments and *tāghūti* regimes

to kill and disfigure their principled Islamic opponents. These Islamic opponents, represented by the Islamic movement in the world today, are opposed to oppressive nation-states and ungodly rulers; but to the dismay of committed Muslims everywhere, there will probably always be those opportunistic types who will quote the words of the Qur'an to cover up the deeds of Satan.

To mention a couple, the secular government in Egypt and the “religious” government in Saudi Arabia stand on no solid ground when they try to use these *āyāt* to justify their tyranny and ruthless actions against their own Islamic countrymen who stand for the word of Allah (ﷻ) and the work of His Prophet (ﷺ). They have no right, when they are not Islamic themselves, to torture and kill their own citizens under the pretext that the “Qur'an says so.” The government in Cairo and the other one in Riyadh have denied Allah's (ﷻ) authority; and not only that, they themselves have usurped the authority that belongs to Allah — and only to Allah (ﷻ).

The punishment for those recreants, who shoot and kill the subjects of Allah (ﷻ), who wildly and in an uncontrolled manner break from Allah's (ﷻ) system and the Prophet's (ﷺ) standard by targeting innocent Muslims and shedding their blood, is the death penalty. This punishment, according to Islamic jurisprudence, corresponds to the severity of the crime. If an insurgent kills innocent people but does not steal their wealth, then his sentence is death. If an insurgent kills innocent people and steals their wealth, then his sentence is death and crucifixion (some legal scholars add that the crucifixion is done after death as a matter of deterring others from such crimes). If the insurrectionist steals but does not kill, then he is diametrically amputated (left foot with right hand, or right foot with left hand). And finally, if an anarchist or mutineer terrorizes the Muslim public without killing or stealing, then he is sentenced to exile.

This understanding has been the mainstream interpretation of *āyah* 5:33 and its penalty details; however this writer's explanation is that the forms of punishment *putting to death*, *crucifixion*, *diametric amputation*, and *banishment* are reciprocal penalties. That is, if insurrectionists and anarchists themselves *put to death*, *crucify*, *dia-*

metrically amputate, banish, or commit any other type of senseless and savage violation of the “right to life,” then their penalty shall be in kind.

In order to get a better grip on this *āyah*, which will probably be used and abused by undisciplined Muslims and hired scholars, some more context is needed. The following information from *tafsīr* literature will help to shed some light on this matter. It is said that some people belonging to the clans of ‘Ukl and ‘Uraynah came to the Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) and professed their Islam; that is, they became Muslims. But, coming from a distance, they found Madinah to be inclement. So the Prophet (ﷺ) provided them with several camels and a shepherd. He told them to proceed to another area with a climate more suitable to their tastes and enjoy the benefits thereof.²²⁰ These individuals left Madinah and went on to a place called al-Ḥarraḥ, and once there, they renounced their Islam. They also killed the shepherd who was sent along with them by the Prophet (ﷺ). From here on they tended to the livestock they had. This whole episode was reported to the Prophet (ﷺ) who had them apprehended and punished.²²¹

The general agreement of the majority of Muslim scholars, in sentiment and belief, is that these drafted Qur’anic punishments, even though there are some incongruent hadiths pertaining to the *āyah*, are applicable to everyone who is guilty of treacherous and heinous state crimes perpetuated within an Islamic jurisdiction inside an Islamic society and state. The punishments are administered after such perfidious criminals are apprehended while committing these horrible and insidious crimes, and a due process to convict them has been observed. The scholarly opinion of learned Muslims who say that these types of dire punishments are limited to traitorous Muslims go on to explain that punishments pertaining to *kāfirs* in a state of war with Muslims are known by textual matter and by precedent. And none of these types of severe penalties are mentioned when it comes to external *kāfir* enemies in a state of war with an Islamic populace and its government.

In any case, the vast majority of Islamic scholars agree that this harsh and painful punishment does apply to “Muslims”

(though not exclusively as many argue). Such seditionists in an Islamic guise, when and if they decide to engage in acts of war, can cause much more damage to an Islamic society and state than an outside enemy because they can use their internal positions and “inside knowledge” to hurt the Muslims. Some scholars have said that this *āyah* fits the Khawārij perfectly.²²²

Another extra element in this *āyah* refers to the *tawbah* (repentance) of such individuals, that is, the repentance of Muslims who have committed a sinister and satanic crime. No such repentance is required of *kāfirs* who are waging a war from the outside. *Kāfirs* are expected in due time to become Muslims, and once they do, they are considered to have been amnestied for their previous sins against Allah (ﷻ) and crimes against humanity's committed Muslims.

The reference to the clan of 'Uraynah above points to a clique of people who became overt Muslims but then used that as a cover to pursue their criminal intentions and agenda. In this case their professed Islam became a vehicle for their larceny and piracy. Under the umbrella of this deep “Islamic” cover, these impostors and predators went on to blind the eyes of shepherds, and then to kill and mutilate their corpses. In some accounts, these criminals molested, sexually abused, and raped the victims' women. It is in light of this that the requital and redress had to be on par with the nature of the crimes committed. The spirit of justice requires as much, **“And the requital of an aberration is a corresponding aberration” (42:40)**. Following on with this theme, the inspirational Qur'an also says, **“...and whoever infringes [and violates] your rights, [then] you infringe their rights in a likewise manner, and be on guard concerning Allah [and His power presence]” (2:194)**.

This *āyah* significantly addresses the issue of deterrence. No other temporal power center should think for a moment about sneaking into an Islamic society and then subverting its social, legal, and governmental structure from within. There may have been, and there still may be out there, individuals and gangs who may entertain the idea of creeping into Islam by feigning Islam; these may be Arabian *mushriks* or they may be other citizens or legal residents of an Islamic state. The penalty, no doubt, is harsh

but the crime also is heinous and horrendous. The draconian sentence is obviously meant to frighten off and scare away any potential traitor. A divine penalization that is on par with the duplicity and perfidy of those who betray Allah's (ﷻ) trust is nothing but fair. People have to understand that even though Allah (ﷻ) is kind and merciful, He is not a "pushover" or a milksop. All of this being said, there is a sacred prohibition placed on any act of mutilation and disfigurement of the human body.

There is no crime more serious than denying a human life its security as it pertains to self, womanhood, and all moral and legal possessions. The history of humanity has, in its numerous twists and turns, run across bandits and gangs who "terrorize" innocent peoples and populations; their punishment should be as serious as to make other potential criminals think many times and for a long time before they embark on episodes of terror and mayhem that deny other people their God-given right to personal safety, social security, and continental peace. This type of sharp-worded and blistering punishment is reserved for people who demonstrate the bloodlust that is consistent with anarchy and sedition, and belong to no underlying cause for personal or social redress.

In the broad body of Islamic jurisprudence, this *āyah* is understood to designate a proscription of all means that lead to social degeneration and legal regression (*sadd al-dharā'i'*); some translations of the term render it as *prohibition of evasive legal devices*. Hence, the stifling penalty is intended to discourage or stop by fear. Danger, difficulty, or other considerations, which undermine the motive for high treason, subversion, and dissimulation, are meant to prevent probable criminals from proceeding with their plans.

This principle of deterrence is not specific to the Qur'anic frame of reference. Deterrence is generally recognized as a policy of "international politics." It is broadly referred to as the retaliatory capability of a nation's military forces that discourages a potential enemy from launching an attack. The concept implies such a vast, diversified, and well protected military and defense infrastructure that a first strike by an enemy would not cripple its ability to retaliate decisively.

Deterrence has been made an effective and “credible” strategy within the larger theater of nation-states in possession of nuclear weapons. Even if most of a nuclear power’s retaliatory capability were destroyed in an initial strike, the potential for mass destruction of enemy cities would remain. Deterrence implies that the people and industry of rival nuclear powers remain perpetual hostages to a planned attack by either. In the yesteryear Cold War rivalry between the two foremost nuclear nation-states (the former Soviet Union and the United States of America), the US deterrent power included MIRV (multiple independently targeted reentry vehicles); intercontinental missiles protected in underground silos; cruise and Pershing II missiles; nuclear-powered submarines with Poseidon multiple-warhead, nuclear-tipped missiles; and a strategic nuclear bomber fleet, some of which was constantly airborne.²²³ Soviet retaliatory power and capabilities — and, hence, deterrence posture — approximated those of the United States.

It, therefore, is clear that the concept of deterrence is in circulation among the big powers of the world; and let us not forget how the Japanese experienced this kind of deterrence in Hiroshima and Nagasaki.²²⁴ But when Muslims are inspired to use the concept of deterrence for the security and safety of their Ummah, they are treated with a barrage of accusations, calumny, and bad press saying that these methods are crude, cold-blooded, and lacking of pity and compassion.

The Zionist Israelis are notorious for using all manner of means, none of which is subject to any international safeguards or conventions on human rights, to set into motion a trajectory of terror. With what they call “strategic escalation,” they can go into foreign countries and bomb their own tourists, and then use their controlled corporate media to blame the Muslims, so as to strategically abort any initiative to redress their crimes and abominations. To ensure their survival, they can incite a sectarian war amongst Muslims that has the potential to last decades, if not centuries, consuming hundreds of thousands of lives in the process. They can use innocent Palestinian Muslim lives as “human shields” in war zones for their national security and military operations. They can bomb

schools, hospitals, ambulances, and apartment buildings with impunity, maiming and killing the people therein, and yet no one has the courage to characterize all these dastardly and murderous deeds as barbaric, bestial, and monstrous. These Zionists and their imperialist cohorts along with their French and British colonialist predecessors would not spare the African or Asian natives' skulls in proving who is the master in their "brave new world" and "new world order." It goes without saying that there is no sense of justice in the way *kāfir* governmental powers behave, especially as compared with the civilized and sublime standards of this scripture, the Qur'an. Deterrence, for them, like everything else, is a means to disarm the enemy while they proceed ahead with their incessant war-making pathology.

The Perpetual War against Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostle

Consider the *āyah* once more in a little bit of a different light, concentrating on the circumstance of war (*ḥarb*),

It is but a fair recompense for those who wage war on Allah and His apostle, and labor to exacerbate corruption on earth, that they are being killed in great numbers... (5:33).

The Qur'anic word in this *āyah* from which the severe penalties ensue is *yuhāribūn* (those who wage war). The grammatical and morphological construct of this word affirms that these types of people are frequently and routinely consumed by initiating and trying to sustain acts of antagonism against Allah (ﷻ). They cannot live in peace with God. They refuse to be free of anxiety and a hostile nature when it comes to the divine. This deep-rooted, aggressive attitude toward God, which they harbor, deprives them of security and stability. Their warlike mental disposition toward Allah (ﷻ) exposes their lives to diffidence and danger.

On a more mundane level, a definition of war is *aggression for purposes of dispossession*. Most of the time, war is launched to strip

the opposing side of money, wealth, and property. But the wording in this *āyah* is not about an elementary war, rather it concerns a sustained and extended war — as if to say there is a strategy of warfare premeditated by those who have taken a harmful and violent position toward Allah (ﷻ). This impassioned and bellicose behavior toward Allah (ﷻ) may be expressed by active warfare, and it may be expressed by methods and means less than a bloody war. In this final revelation, the Qur'an, there is reference to active warfare in more than 100 *āyāt*. As for having an extended strategy of consistent warfare that may continue for generations and centuries, this type of entangled and high-voltage continuous warfare is mentioned in this *āyah* and in another. The latter one speaks about the Muslim dual-loyalists (*munāfiqs*) in Madinah who wanted to establish a *masjid* parallel to the Prophet's (ﷺ) *masjid* for the purpose of derailing his leadership and undermining Islam from within,

And those [dual-loyalists/*munāfiqs*] who have established a [separate] *masjid* in order to create mischief, and to promote *kufr* and division among the committed Muslims, and to provide an outpost for all who from the outset have been [strategically] warring against Allah and His Apostle... (9:107).

This *masjid* is known in Islamic history as “Masjid al-Ḍirār.” The so-called *masjid* was meant to be a lookout station for those influential people in the society of Madinah, many of them wealthier than the committed Muslims, who considered themselves in a long and protracted war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). They were residents of Madinah long before the first brick was ever laid in the construction of such a contrarian *masjid*. Chief among these combatants for *kufr* was a person known as Abū 'Āmir al-Rāhib. He had a reputation of being virulently hostile to Islam, going to the extent of pledging to his fellow *munāfiqs* that he could secure an army of warriors from the Byzantine king to inflict a military rout on the Prophet (ﷺ) and the committed Muslims. From the historical record of the Prophet's (ﷺ) stay in Madinah, it appears

that the hostility of Abū ‘Āmir al-Rāhib was more strategic than martial as he was not involved in front-line military operations. And even though this was the case, the scenario itself was described by the Qur’anic word *ḥarābah*, which means that this contingent of “Muslim citizens” in the state of Madinah were contemplating a long and drawn-out plan of opposition against the legitimate and established Islamic authority of Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). Thus, even a strategy of sedition, a “cold war” so to speak, which may or may not lead to the crossing of swords or the exchange of gunfire, has been characterized by Allah (ﷻ) as warfare.

The word *ḥarb* occurs in four places throughout four *sūrah*s in this careful Book. On one occasion, it is used to give an ultimatum to those who promote and institutionalize *ribā* (usury). The usury barons are put on notice, by these words of Allah (ﷻ), that they are at war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ); and this, because they consume and devour peoples’ wealth immorally and illegitimately. In other parts of the Qur’an, the word *ḥarb* comes out to be the antonym of the word *peace*. In nomadic parts of the world there still are forays and raids by tribes and clans against others of their ilk for purposes of capturing money and territory. These, as limited or contained as they may be, are still acts of aggression included in the meaning of war.

Some of the books of early Islamic scholars have distinguished between *muḥārabah/ḥarābah* (strategic and generational warfare) on the one hand and battles and conventional warfare on the other. There are important distinctions between *jihad*, *qitāl*, and *muḥārabah*. The cornerstone of the definition of *muḥārabah* is found in these two *āyāt* of *Sūrah al-Mā’idah* (5:33–34), and the one in *Sūrah Barā’ah*, the 9th *sūrah*, also referred to as *Sūrah al-Tawbah* (9:107).

Obviously, a strategic and long-term war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostle (ﷺ) will at times be punctuated by “hot wars” (soldiers engaged in combat, use of weapons, civilian casualties, dislocations, etc.) while at other times by acts of desperate criminals. Regardless of how the war takes shape on the ground, the point here is that any type of enduring, protracted, and integrated warfare can only be executed by “state powers” and “military

authorities” — *ahl al-shawkah*, in the language of the *faqīhs*. These power centers will have their “striking forces,” their clandestine operations, and their “elite forces” whose objective would be to erode the state structure of Islam or to harass the political will of the Islamic Ummah by means of a declaration of war, or military invasions, or acts of sabotage and plots of subversion. The intent and purpose of such organized state power belonging to *kufr* is to wreak havoc and spread sedition throughout Islamic territories and within Islamic societies.

Some minds that have caved into the secular gestalt will condescendingly ask: but how can humans wage a war against God and His apostle? If these pompous advocates of secularism, who look down on the “religious” types, were confident in their own position, then they would move this argument away from the domain that sustains their own biases — that is, the material one. Clearly human opponents of God can never subject God to their material and military arsenals; God is not a military objective that can be targeted by missiles and projectiles. Humans, though, may launch into all forms of hostility and aggression against the laws belonging to Allah (ﷻ), which He has placed in the nature of things and in man’s state of nature, as well as in the social conventions and behavioral norms that characterize functional human relations at all levels. It is the laws of God that guarantee social peace as well as trans-national security. Allah (ﷻ) has imparted truth and legitimacy to the physical and social spheres of life, central to which is His entrusting man with the imperative of justice. All this has been demonstrated to humanity and bequeathed to coming generations by virtue of Muhammad’s (ﷺ) calling, discipline, and life history.

Therefore, any systemic strategy that reneges on this God-given trust, trying to undo the *dīn* of Allah (ﷻ), working night and day to break away from this responsible relationship with Him, places itself in a position of engaging in a marathon war against Allah (ﷻ) and His apostle. This long-range and long-lasting opposition to Allah (ﷻ) in the form of all types of warfare is reminiscent of the *āyah* that puts usurious business leaders and corporate highwaymen, who are hell-bent on maintaining their *ribā* premi-

ums and prerogatives, on red alert, **“Be advised of a war [set in motion] by Allah and His Messenger...”** (2:279).

Therefore, any movement or trend in a constituted Islamic society and state that is in antagonistic opposition to God’s peaceful laws and His secure domain therein are, for all practical purposes, in a state of hostility against Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostle (ﷺ). In this contentious situation, it is the God-given right of the Islamic decision-making body — its executive branch and its commander in chief who are jointly held responsible for justice and the preservation of law and order — to go to war against these agitators and subversives who either have a military force or are in the process of coalescing into one. Their core objective would be to undermine God’s authority, to delegitimize His legal code, and to subvert the human agency that is founded on such authority and legitimacy.²²⁵ The war against these breakaway fomenters and troublemakers has to continue until they come to their senses and move ahead to Allah (ﷻ), or are vanquished. The door to Allah (ﷻ) is always open: all they need to do is proceed in this direction and He will accept their apologies and atonement. But if these recalcitrants and mutineers remain hostile to a just authority that implements God’s given laws with honesty and transparency, then they bring upon themselves the awful results of punishment and penalty that are outlined in this *āyah*.

What cannot escape the attention of the maturing Muslim mind is that the spearheads of hostility, who are hard-core *kāfirs* in a systemic denial of Allah’s (ﷻ) authority, have enough influence and power or enough potential influence and power such that they are transformed into agents of a catastrophic meltdown of harmony and order in the world. If these breakaway elites who are in God-denial are not checked by those who stand for Allah’s (ﷻ) authority on earth, power will become concentrated in the hands of the aggressive, predatory military powers will converge, and a group of like-minded, power-centric men will want to organize and direct the world according to their man-made laws and their academically sponsored theories. They will reach the tempting moment in life when they will think that everything is in place and nobody, not

even God, can stop them. Their historical moment will “mature” when change throughout the world happens the way they want it to.

This power bloc, having been separated from Allah (ﷻ) and having worked on separating the human condition from Him, is the one that is working on human issues such as population control. Their secular laws make husbands and wives feel and act in a way where they have to solicit “approval” for something as basic as the desire to have babies. These so-called free-market powers are not content with the application of their God-denial in the natural course of “supply and demand”; they think their material appraisals, cost-benefit analyses, austerity programming, and bottom-lining extend into all aspects of human life. Hence, they feel no pangs of conscience when they intrude into people’s bedrooms and redirect the purpose of sex, culminating in today’s confused notions of sex without reproduction and reproduction without sex. Their control of human life on planet earth seeks to refashion sex education into a tool of world hegemony. Once man forsakes God anything is marketable: homosexuality, bisexuality, transsexuality, hedonistic sexuality, and same-sex marriage.

This is the strategic war against Allah (ﷻ) and His apostle. In this long and drawn-out hostility to Allah (ﷻ), scripture, and prophets, a world centered on the powerful and the powermongers begins to take shape. This power elite, devoid of God, legalizes euthanasia and limits access to affordable medical care thus making the extermination of the elderly a fiscal necessity because it is just too expensive to care for them, and with the nature of social conditioning going on, something socially acceptable.²²⁶ Their strategic war effort against Allah (ﷻ) is attended by the aspiration to control or “manage” every human interaction, from the micro (personal) to the macro (social) level. A key pillar in this strategy is the way they exert control over medicine, which is tied directly to whether human beings live or die and what expectations they have for quality of life. In the world of medicine today, there is now only one official and recognized form of it: allopathic medicine. And, once again, their social conditioning to this end moves people to trust no other system of medicine, even if it has answers that

allopathy does not. This sanctioning of a strict chemical remedy to the ailments of man has sidelined many private practitioners who may collectively belong to more than a dozen methods of treating and curing an assortment of ailments and diseases. And with this myopic approach, it should come as no surprise that there has been a rise in “the difficult to diagnose” and “untreatable” diseases. The hostility toward humanity coming from a war against God even rationalizes the suppression of cancer cures as a means of population control. Silent killers, such as heart attacks and strokes, claim millions and millions of lives that may otherwise have been successfully treated in a world bound to Allah (ﷻ) by affection and care. As part of the blueprint for this war against Allah (ﷻ), the forced and profit-driven departure of medicine from that age-old adage of “doing no harm” coupled with the secularization of law-making has extended legal protection to organized post-coital contraception like tax-funded abortion, where people literally pay out of their own pockets to snuff out the lives of their own children.

From the ivory towers of these humans at war with God’s natural and social laws comes word of corrupting the understanding of scripture. The Bible’s meanings were revamped through revisions of its key words. And now the obsession of these godlings is to annul or neutralize the meanings of this Qur’an. They have subdued the churches; and currently they are trying to subdue the *masjids*. Their secular world, which cannot tolerate an authoritative divinity, seeks to restructure education as a tool of indoctrination. Hence, they put more children in schools for more time; yet when they graduate, they leave with less knowledge and a diminishing intellect. And this is how these power-hogs condition human minds at their formative young ages to accept control over who has access to information. In the past few centuries in the “Christian” world, secular schools have become the hub of the community. The subtle penetration of the Muslim realm in this regard aims to repeat that experience so as to have Muslims dislocate from an educational Islamic tradition centered around the *masjid* to a secular and material education revolving around their godless school systems. If things go their way many thought-inspiring and basic Islamic texts

and books would be out of circulation. Authentic Islamic books would disappear from libraries, as is the case already in many, if not most, of the majority Muslim countries.

A millennial war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Rasūl (ﷺ) would reverse what Allah (ﷻ) is communicating to man. Thus if intoxicants, alcohol, and drugs are *ḥarām*, these long-range warriors against Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) will peddle alcohol as a social and communal requisite. If Allah's (ﷻ) world is barrier-free where travel is open and encouraged, these same combatants against Allah (ﷻ) will place all sorts of restrictions on human movement. After placing populations in legal cages of their own making, they go on to build more jails and prisons; they may even use hospitals as detention centers of one kind or another.

The above represents just a taste of what may be described as wholesale and unqualified disobedience to Allah (ﷻ). There are *āyāt* in the Qur'an concerning the penalty for thieves and adulterers. That punishment is applicable to individuals who fall prey to the associated vices. However, when the world is witness to a system that sponsors and promotes these sins and crimes, then at least the Muslims of that world have to recognize they are looking at a different class of people. That is why this *āyah* exposes this class of people. When a thief steals he does not do so with the support of a government; and when an adulterer commits adultery he does not do so with the backing of an authority. The type and nature of the culprits defined in this *āyah* are those who assist, nurture, and sustain these violations of morality and legality in a universal sense. That is why an individual thief or adulterer cannot be considered part of an active and extended strategy of defying God's word and law; and hence the penalty that accrues to such individuals is not as severe as that which is applied to those who manage systems at war with God.

This age-long war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) incurs the punishment outlined in these *āyāt* when it rears its head in an Islamic society and state. Obviously, in a territory of *kufr* there may be a parallel promotion of systematic vice and "legalized" criminality. But the rules in this *āyah* cannot be applied in a *kāfir*

domain; the interaction of Islam with this *kāfir* state of affairs is ruled by the nature of the relationship between the two state entities, the Islamic one and the *kāfir* one. The details thereof are found in the discourse on jihad and not in the discourse on *muḥārabah*. Thus, it is of timely importance to reiterate that these harsh penalties concern and are applicable to “Muslims” and other citizens of an Islamic state who harbor a systematic and a potentially violent war of many years and generations against the central and legitimate authority of an Islamic society and state.

To meet the definition of *muḥārabah*, nihilistic and terroristic individuals who are citizens of the Islamic state would have to be in possession of weapons or weapon systems. When no weapons are involved, the concept of *muḥārabah* does not come into play. Suffice it to say that whenever there are means and ways to cause instability and destruction to an Islamic social order by a group of organized people on earth, they then fall within the definition of *muḥārabah*.

What becomes the inescapable penalty of those who enter into this war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ)?

They are being killed in great numbers, or crucified in great numbers, or have, in result of their perverseness, their hands and feet cut off in great numbers, or are being [entirely] banished from [the face of] the earth... (5:33).

The consequence of this premeditated war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger is that of a class of elite power potentates and finance barons declaring wars against other peoples and then virtually the whole world. These elites who set out to circumvent Allah’s (ﷻ) natural and social laws wind up being the victims of these same laws. Committed Muslims who uphold Allah’s (ﷻ) *sharī‘ah* are motivated to take action against these *kāfir* elites and to augment their efforts, the world’s natural laws will simultaneously begin to work against these *kāfir* elites. The combined forces of Allah’s (ﷻ) social workers and His natural phenomena team up to multiply the number of casualties and to intensify the moments of death.

An unabating war against Allah (ﷻ), whose very source is buried within the Muslims themselves, carries with it dire consequences and horrible details. This is reminiscent of the punishments incurred by the Children of Israel. When people who are supposed to be close to Allah (ﷻ) have a cancer on the inside, which itself is the breeding ground of His harshest enemies, then these enemies can expect the harshest and severest consequences,

...or are crucified in great numbers, or have, as a result of their perverseness, their hands and feet cut off in great numbers, or are being [altogether] banished from [the face of] the earth... (5:33).

This describes how wars unfold and what happens to those who are on the losing side of a lengthy and wide-ranging war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostle (ﷺ).

These elites, who are in a declared or undeclared, prolonged state of war with Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) through their unrelenting efforts and campaigns emanating, of all places, from within an Islamic social order, are involved in a continual conflict against Allah (ﷻ). The consequences of what they do in their open clash may result in death and destruction from earthquakes or floods that come about due to their deliberate violation of Allah's (ﷻ) *sunan* (social laws). Other results manifest themselves as off-and-on wars and persecution that spring from the committed Muslims' engaging these belligerents for the purpose of preserving Allah's (ﷻ) physical and behavioral laws.

In the last 100 years, earthquakes have killed more than two million people around the world. In modern times, earthquakes and war are the most likely causes of large-scale conflagration. Topical secular science aside, the fact that human society marches to the tune of the bankers' and military's coordination of efforts has led to the graphic and disturbing details of a terrifying condition. Through the biblical Flood and now the hurricanes, cyclones, and increasingly violent rotating storms runs a thread of ruin and destruction. The causes of twisters, tornados, and typhoons and

flooding due to “freak weather conditions” — as secular meteorologists would characterize them — can all be traced back to the executives and commanders of this protracted war against Allah (ﷻ). They do not realize that in their denial of God, through the agency of the financial, military, and political decisions they make, the cumulative impact of it all comes back to haunt human society in a form that demonstrates to man how defenseless he is when Allah (ﷻ) speaks His word.

Drought is still the chief cause of famine around the world. Other causes — such as floods, crop disease and failure, warfare, and overpopulation — are described in non-scriptural texts, but simple lack of rain, particularly in Africa and Asia, is the main cause of the long-drawn-out suffering that famine entails. Accidental fire in buildings, large and small, can still produce tragically high death tolls. And all this, too, is directly attributable to a world of humans who have lost their direction when it comes to Allah (ﷻ); and not only that, they behave as if all is fine when the rich and powerful are dragging humanity into a “head-on collision” with divinity.

Modern medicine had thought it has eradicated such ancient killers as cholera, bubonic plague, pandemic influenza, and smallpox. But they are subdued, not vanquished. Widespread malnutrition or civil war can easily enough provide the conditions for their return. It only takes a sustained break with Allah (ﷻ) and a prolonged confrontation with Him to bring back the miserable years of plagues, pandemics, and pestilence.

Man’s inventive ambition, particularly in the area of transportation, has often outstripped his technical knowhow. Bridges collapse, “unsinkable” ships sink, giant airships explode, and aircraft collide. Even if all this could happen in a world society at peace with Allah (ﷻ), the fact is that the frequency and magnitude of these catastrophes cannot but highlight our utter disrespect and disregard of Allah (ﷻ) — and this is the ultimate cause of the rising incidents and the growing number of human and non-human casualties.

Debilitating economic crises including the South Sea Bubble, the Great Depression, and PIIGS in the European Union, which

were caused by faults in or complete failure of the complex systems man creates to control his economic affairs, are another eyeopener concerning the scrapping of Allah's (ﷻ) scripture and the snubbing of His Apostle (ﷺ).²²⁷ Wars have always left in their wake a toxic brew of misery, disease, and suffering. Improved technology and national constriction have meant that few will escape being involved in future conflicts. Approximately 64 million people died in the two world wars of the 20th century. And with weapons of mass destruction now in the arsenals of dozens of power-centered, financially acquisitive, and God-denying politicians, future war scenarios are doomsday visions. Since the Industrial Revolution, science and technology have mastered many of man's ancient enemies.²²⁸ But occasionally his weapons have proved two-edged. Deadly pollution, chemical explosions, and inadequately tested drugs have all become too depressingly familiar.

These, collectively, are symptoms of a humanity that has taken issue with God and His Prophet (ﷺ). Coming from a habitat of *kufr* and an environment of secular institutions this may be expected. But an Islamic authority and an Islamic governance cannot allow for these acts of war against Allah (ﷻ) to take root. Should they sprout, they will be attended by scenes of wholesale corruption on earth, resulting in their perpetrators and patrons **"...being crucified in great numbers, or as a result of their perverseness, their hands and feet cut off in great numbers, or being [altogether] banished from [the face of] the earth..."**

A restless earth prone to natural upheavals, drought and famine, plague and pestilence, tragic accidents, economic disasters, the horrors of genocidal wars, man's inhumanity to man, scientific disasters, and physical and social crises beyond the hope of man is symptomatic of the features of a mankind in a state of hostility toward Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). In an Islamic social order, all of this would be "aborted at the time of conception."

An often overlooked observation in this context is that an Islamic society and state offer their subjects an unprecedented degree of freedom that permits such evil humans the opportunity to contemplate and then try to initiate nihilistic movements.

However, it goes without saying that any nihilistic fighting force, which tries to “take on” the laws of God in life and existence wherever that may be, will be of utmost concern to all committed Muslims who have raised their level of responsibilities to the position of governance. So just as these *āyāt* are alerting the Muslims to utterly destructive social trends whose agents are cunningly manipulative, the body of Islamic representatives composing an Islamic governance should follow suit and not become complacent about these ruinous trends wherever they may attempt to launch into a lengthy war against Allah’s (ﷻ) scripture and His Prophet’s (ﷺ) model.

No Place in Islam for Torture and Mutilation

The majority of legal (*fiqhī*) opinions about this *āyah* converge on an *ijtihād* that gives a legislative license to the courts and law-enforcement agencies in an Islamic society to inflict an appropriate punishment upon those who are guilty of causing corruption on earth. The penalty options range, according to this opinion or *ijtihād*, from execution (*qatl*), to crucifixion (*salb*), to severance of body parts (*qaṭʿ*), to exile (*nafy*). But in the overall context of a potential emergence of a band of people from within an Islamic state and society who may develop into a power capable of engaging in a long and protracted war against the divine norms from Allah (ﷻ), the scriptural principals in the Qur’an, the authoritative nature of revelation, and the legislative, judicial, and decision-making example of Muhammad (ﷺ), according to this writer’s humble view, the paramilitary infrastructure of these types of belligerent opponents of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) will eventually encounter the combined forces of nature and man (the net integration of physical and social *sunan*). And it is the aggregate impact of these combined forces that will inflict such horrible dismemberment of self and society and such inhumane punishment as described by the words, “...they will be killed in great numbers, or crucified in great numbers, or their hands and feet cut off in great numbers, or banished from [the face] of the earth...”

This writer does not understand this *āyah* to legislate any form of legalistic punishment, and in this regard, there is a hadith that would mitigate this understanding of the *āyah*. The Prophet of Allah (ﷺ) is reported to have instructed society as follows,

Verily, Allah has prescribed perfection in doing everything, so if you have to terminate a life, do so with proficiency [that is, do it with the least amount of pain and suffering]; and if you sacrifice [an animal], do so with proficiency [with the least amount of pain and suffering], and anyone doing the task should sharpen his blade and comfort the animal [to be sacrificed].”²²⁹

So if the Muslims are required to alleviate as much pain as possible from a form of life at its moment of death, they cannot contradict themselves and proceed to legislate and execute what amounts to an inhuman, cruel, and excruciating death by way of official crucifixions, regulated mass murders, reverse limb amputations, etc. Besides, when Islamic penalties are outlined in the Qur'an for serious crimes, they are pronounced in the form of a verbal order such as **“As for the adulteress and the adulterer, whip each of them with a hundred stripes...”** (24:2), or **“...as for the thief [racketeer and financial public enemy], male or female, sever the hand of either of them...”** (5:38). The *āyah* when considered together with these other details reveals a scenario of what happens to people who aggressively and strategically confront, in war proportions, Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostle (ﷺ). This picture of bodily injuries, social dismemberment, and harsh and callous infliction of suffering could only come from the combined “retaliation” of man and nature against those who should have known better and lived by the morals and laws of Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ).

“Such is their stigma in this world; yet in the life to come [yet more] awesome suffering awaits them.” This sentence points out that people who are corrupted to such an extent as to manufacture a will to “fight God” and to do so for a long time shall never get away with their evil, elaborate, and systematic plan of action. People, Muslims, and thinkers who read these facts should always

be careful of a trend in society that begins to accumulate power and wealth and then leverages this combination into a program that has no compunctions about taking on Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) in a violent way. So far, human society has shown weakness in not taking public notice of the possibility of this happening and it has not drawn up plans and effectuated procedures that would minimize this evil class of people or even blunt their attempts whenever they make their moves.

And as is the case with a Qur'an of kindness and a scripture of sympathy, Allah (ﷻ) has excluded individuals and peoples who extricate themselves from positions of hostility and warfare against divinity before it is too late. There may be, in the long course of this prolonged warfare against Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ), those who begin to see the digression and deviation of this blatant attack on Allah's (ﷻ) authority, His standards, and His criteria, so they decide to exclude themselves from this terrible course of action and ask Allah (ﷻ) for mercy and forgiveness before His *shar'ī* laws catch up with them and before natural disasters befall them. These types of people who reconsider their involvement in this grand war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ) may demonstrate their contrition by stepping down from positions of power. In rare instances, this would be an indication of their sincerity in amending their ways as they publicly plead repentance, express their apology to Allah (ﷻ), and regret being part of a scheme that can only bring the worst type of punishment upon themselves as individuals and their people as societies in this world and in the life that awaits them after death. So the door of *tawbah* is opened even for these types of felons, criminals, and evildoers, **"...for you must know that Allah is much-forgiving, and mercy-giving."**

To be forgiven by Allah (ﷻ) in this context means withdrawal from the other people who are still in their war of corruption on earth and of opposing Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). These Muslims en route to sincerity should feel the guilt of their past activities, be more forthcoming to those who have been victimized by their plots and plans, and become actively opposed to their previous peers.

Taqwá Is the Antidote to Destructive Wars and Mayhem

O you who are committed [to Allah]! Remain on guard concerning Allah's power presence in your lives, and seek the means that bring you closer to Him, and strive hard in His cause, so that you might be fortunate. Verily, if those who are bent on denying the truth [of Allah's power] had all that is on earth, and twice as much, to offer as ransom from suffering on the Day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from them, for grievous suffering awaits them. They want to leave the Fire, but they shall not come out of it; and long-lasting suffering awaits them (5:35–37).

This lesson follows in the direct aftermath of those who are set on a lifelong fight against Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ). Their fight is an issue of power; they want power for themselves exclusively and hence cannot countenance power belonging to people of God. The power-mongers who are hell-bent on God-denial in every sphere of life characteristically combine the leverage of money with the clout of the military. This is their methodology for gaining and dispensing power.

To understand this in the power dynamics of Madinah at that time, there were the Yahūd who were contemplating power thrusts against Muhammad (ﷺ) and the committed and cause-centered Muslims around him. Their evil ideas, which had sprung out of their “power position,” even moved them to consider assassinating Muhammad (ﷺ). This was nothing new; during the course of their history, the Yahūd have been infamous for the attempts, assaults, and deadly attacks against God's Prophets and Apostles (ﷺ). In Arabia and its vicinity, the Yahūd and Naṣārā had an exaggerated sense of their self-importance. They presented themselves as God's children and God's people, as well as God's race. Lest the committed Muslims fall prey to this degenerate psychology by themselves feeling inferior, Allah (ﷻ) immediately reminds the committed Muslims to be highly sensitized and internally confident of Allah's (ﷻ)

power presence in society and His power projection in their surroundings. Therefore, if Muslims in Madinah (or elsewhere) were concerned with power and influence, they should work for it through their principled and determined position with Allah (ﷻ). The method of joining Allah (ﷻ) is to work His will; regardless of the power centers and power figures in society at large. It is Allah's (ﷻ) power that counts and Muslims should never lose sight of this fact. Only by a self-certainty of Allah's (ﷻ) power that becomes a convincing public opinion in an Islamic society can their be hope for a practical channel to Allah (ﷻ). This would be the only way to prevail over the Yahūdī/Naṣrānī attitude of self-centered superiority.

To integrate this further into the Qur'anic "moving picture," recall the *āyāt* of the *sūrah* leading up to this moment. The opening frames were of the two sons of Adam (ﷺ) and how an aggressive attitude developed in one of them against the other. This intrusive and offensive attitude had the potential of expressing itself on a larger scale and victimizing not only a close brother but distant masses of people — potentially in their billions. The antidote to this pugnacious and bellicose behavior was the sense of *taqwá* that has to become an integral part of the public mind and common sense. A perception of *taqwá* inhibits uncontrolled feelings of envy, initiation of hostilities, and a proliferation of tension that leads to destructive wars and mayhem. Therefore, in the absence of any personal and social belonging to Allah (ﷻ), the terrible consequences of massive conflicts that take their horrible toll on human populations can be traced to the initial notions and feelings of spite and resentment at the success of others. The material possessions and the ethereal feelings we have should be placed in an overall intuition, sensation, and ferment of *taqwá*. And so with this understanding, we thus read,

O you who are securely committed [to Allah]! Remain on guard concerning Allah's power presence in your [personal and social] lives, and try to obtain a process and method that bring you close to Him, and strive hard in His cause, so that you might be productive (5:35).

Being on guard concerning Allah (ﷻ) in a sense means that human beings develop a common psychology — a public opinion — that is sensitive to the issue of disregarding, disrespecting, and disobeying Him. In this social and societal context no one wants to evoke Allah's (ﷻ) wrath, and therefore His punishment. His wrath and punishment though are inevitable consequences of falling out with Him or taking issue with His physical and social *sunan* (regulations). These God-ordained laws of nature and man are at work in man's internal self as well as in the farthest detectable and undetectable star beyond the horizons. Approaching God, then, is a process. When man honors Him and His laws he moves that much closer to Him.

The word *wasīlah* in this *āyah* refers to *the method and the process*. Thus, Muslims of commitment should view their communal life as one of pursuing a method and a process that will move them into a closer relationship and a nearby proximity with Allah (ﷻ). Muslims should understand and act knowing that their whole life is to be exhausted in a method, a discipline, and a system of rules and conduct that will lead to Allah's (ﷻ) nearness. Even before commencing their five *ṣalāḥs* each day, they should take into account the following hadith of the Prophet (ﷺ), the supplication from which is said after the *adhān* (call to *ṣalāḥ*) and before *takbīrah al-iḥrām*,

*Whoever says, upon hearing the call [for ṣalāḥ], "O Allah! The Sustainer of this accomplished da'wah and this dynamic ṣalāḥ, grant Muhammad the wasīlah and the faḍīlah [the access and the virtue] and rejuvenate him unto the blessed status You have promised him," will be permitted my intercession on the Day of Judgement.*²³⁰

According to the hadith above, the Prophet (ﷺ) goes on to say, "Whoever says this conventional statement of fundamental principles is due my intercession [*shafā'ah*] on the Day of Resurrection."²³¹ In another hadith he said,

*When you hear the mu'adhdhin, repeat what he says, then after that, invoke blessings upon me: whoever does so once, Allah will reward him for it ten times as much; then ask [Allah to grant] me the wasilah as it becomes a status in Paradise reserved for a subject of Allah whom I hope to be. Whoever beseeches for me this wasilah is granted the shafā'ah.*²³²

It would appear that a consistent discipline satisfactory to Allah (ﷻ) in this world will eventually lead to one of the highest positions in paradise — an ambition that lives in the conscience and spirit of every active and committed Muslim.

“And strive hard in His cause...” This will require a struggle against the urges and compulsions of a coveting self. The disciplined Muslim on his way to Allah (ﷻ) adheres to the truth whatever the circumstances are. If the time arrives and enemies have to be fought, he will do that. And before doing it, he will know how to define an enemy. Any force that impedes the free flow of scripture and its meanings to the public mind is an enemy. The word *jāhidū* (strive and struggle) in this *āyah*, as in all other *āyāt*, tells the committed Muslims to exert themselves through sacrifices and material losses on a well-defined course to Allah (ﷻ) — a course made distinctive by certainty, honesty, and authenticity, along with grace, merit, and dignity. Every effort expended toward this end is an integral element of jihad. At the end of the day, people will have to decide whether they want Allah (ﷻ) or not; and this decision cannot be made in a fair manner when there are all sorts of interests, conglomerates, and powers that impede the flow of information between scripture and society.

In a materialistic and God-denying world, which puts all kinds of derogatory labels on Islam, the Muslims have to remind themselves that their social conduct is not shaped by the fear of an oppressive legal code or harsh threshold of punishment. It is true that scriptural penalties are exacting and repellent. But no one, especially the Muslims, should lose sight of the fact that these punishments come from a moral fabric that is intended to preserve a core of compatibility with Allah (ﷻ). The Islamic approach to

exciting commitment requires attitudes to adjust voluntarily and willingly to the moral standards of Allah (ﷻ) as outlined in this Book and in the Sunnah, **“A change in attitude cannot be coerced [for a rational mind can decide for itself since] distinct is the conscious maturity [of Islam] from the heedlessness [of self-delusion]...”** (2:256). The legal aspect of a scriptural society is an extension of its moral component. Morality needs some basic laws to grow and flourish. Likewise, for immorality to decline and disappear, some basic laws are needed. This Qur'an, initiating from the Creator, works on both these fronts — the moral and the legal — in a fair and balanced way. Souls, hearts, and consciences are paired with procedures, laws, and punishments. All of this coupling comes from a general and overwhelming sense of *taqwá* — warding off Allah's (ﷻ) prevalent and ultimate corrective power,

O you who are committed [to the power of Allah]! Remain guarded concerning Allah's power presence in your [personal and social] lives, and attempt the process and means that will bring you contiguous to Him, and struggle hard in His cause, so that you might be effectively flourishing. Verily, if those who are bent on denying the truth [of Allah's power presence in human life] had all that is on earth, and twice as much, to offer as ransom from suffering on the Day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from them: for afflictive agony awaits them. They will wish to come out of the Fire, but they shall not come out of it; and long-lasting torment awaits them (5:35–37).

These *āyāt* illustrate that the Qur'an is concerned with the salvation of the human spirit. It approaches this human from all possible directions to try to offer him a way to Allah (ﷻ) and a way out of misery and intense unhappiness. Everything is being done here in this inviting Book to configure a peaceful and guided person rather than a tense and drifting human being. What counts at the end of a lifetime is the redemption of the human spirit. When

corporal punishment is used within society it is only one way of accomplishing or trying to accomplish the end result: human salvation. Punishment itself is never an end and it is not the only means to be used in the overall program of scripture.

The information about the two sons of Adam (ﷺ) is meant to raise human awareness of man's tendency toward violence and murder. But the intelligent response to this offense is the knowledge that an act of premeditated murder cannot go unpunished. And in following what Allah (ﷻ) is saying here, what becomes evident is the realization that He is telling every individual to raise his level of confidential *taqwá* and all society to raise its level of general *taqwá*. This *āyah* like many others in the Qur'an makes it the Muslims' responsibility to induce and universalize the fact that Allah's (ﷻ) power presence overwhelms all other considerations.

In a much more elementary sense man should be afraid of Allah (ﷻ) when he offends Him. He will show man His power and His wrath if he appalls Him. This may explain why over and over, many times throughout this considerate Qur'an, man is reminded of what counts most, **“O you who are committed to Allah! Remain on guard concerning Allah's power presence in your lives...”** One of the elements in man raising his guard is that he fears Allah (ﷻ). And human beings do not generally express any fear toward those who are weaker than they are. Therefore, it is only reasonable for humans to fear Allah (ﷻ) because He is the ultimate power. But in real life, man expresses his fear of worldly powers and sometimes this goes as far as excluding any fear of Allah (ﷻ). The dignity of a human being necessitates that whenever there is a “clash of fears,” he fears only Allah (ﷻ). The fear of a sword or a bullet dwarfs in comparison with the type of punishment Allah (ﷻ) has for all who defy and deny Him. A disciplined and conscious fear of Allah (ﷻ) is a compliment, an honor, and a nobility. This is a portion of *taqwá* that lives in man's locus of feelings and intuition — privately and publicly. This heightened awareness of Allah's (ﷻ) power causes man to cease doing what is wrong even when he thinks he can get away with it as far as people are concerned. *Taqwá* is not people-specific; it is God-specific.

Therefore if one cannot hide anything from God, then he cannot get away with anything, even though he may be able to hide it from man and his legal system. Thus a legal system itself cannot survive without this element of *taqwá*. A society cannot survive by laws alone. Man needs to have an internal monitor that acknowledges the attributes of Allah (ﷻ). From here on, God-given laws act to facilitate this moral consciousness that extends from the privacy of a home to the frontiers of the homeland.

“And seek the means that bring you closer to Him...” After generalizing a public notion of Allah’s (ﷻ) immediate and adjacent power, the committed Muslims are told to look for the ways and means that will move them closer to Allah (ﷻ). Our need for Allah (ﷻ) stimulates us to find our regulated course unto Him. All those wholesome activities of life that become a path to Allah (ﷻ) when they are initiated by a sense of *taqwá* and driven by our confidence in Him lead to prosperity and good fortune, **“...so that you might be competent and efficient.”**

On the other end of this life spectrum are the *kāfirs* and their patterns of behavior sustained by a synopsis of the way they view things. These *kāfirs* do not have a notion of *taqwá*. They do not look for any means to approach Allah (ﷻ), and they do not want to be bothered with a definition of success and prosperity that comes from Allah (ﷻ). The Qur’anic “paint brush” draws a picture of their predicament,

Verily, if those who are bent on denying the truth [about Allah’s power] had all that is on earth, and twice as much, to offer as ransom from suffering on the Day of Resurrection, it would not be accepted from them: for grievous suffering awaits them. They will wish to come out of the Fire, but they shall not come out of it; and long-lasting suffering awaits them (5:36–37).

These words can only come from Allah (ﷻ) who knows how these people think and how they behave. They will even carry the baggage of their materialistic mentality and “enterprising” attitude all

the way to the Day of Reckoning. At the end of the day, you are who you are. And hence it should come as no surprise that they will try to buy their way out of “the real thing.” They were in the habit of having everything done their way in the world because they had the money and the clout that goes with it. Yet despite the egotism that goes with trying to “pay off” He who already owns everything, Allah (ﷻ) is generous to them as He alerts them to the fact — before it is too late — that even if they had everything on earth twice over and offered all of it as payment for their release from an impending doom, it would do them no good. Their life in the fast lane of this world will come to a dead end in the world just around the corner. As one reads these Qur’anic words and applies them to the society he lives in, he can almost see these commercial personalities, financial barons, moneyed people, and upper-class celebrities trying to buy their way to heaven. What a pathetic sight. At the moment when they realize that their worldly market wits cannot rescue them, these poor frustrated figures will enter into a fire from which there is no escape. The footage ends here and they are no longer to be seen.

Is the Islamic Ruling for Theft Unduly Severe?

This lesson, which included the combination of forces, seen and unseen, against nihilists and outcasts who have a generational plan against Allah (ﷻ) and His Apostle (ﷺ), concludes with a ruling on the lesser criminals of society, those who are found guilty of theft.

Now as for the man who steals and the woman who steals, cut off the hand of either of them in requital for what they have wrought, as a deterrent ordained by Allah: for Allah is almighty, wise. But as for him who repents after having thus done wrong, and makes amends, behold, Allah will accept his repentance: verily, Allah is much-forgiving, merciful.

Do you not know that Allah’s is the dominion over the heavens and the earth? He chastises whom He

wills, and He forgives whom He wills, for Allah has the power to will anything (5:38–40).

Much has been said, especially by detractors of Islam, about this Islamic legal punishment of those who are guilty of larceny. To put things in perspective, before the implementation of any laws and legalities, an Islamic state and society cannot even carry the Islamic label unless they have first fulfilled their moral outreach and satisfied their ethical standards. Therefore, a moral Islamic society coupled with a responsible Islamic state is required to offer its constituents and citizens, regardless of faith, creed, or denomination, the necessities of life in which there is no need, no distress, and no necessity to acquire something else belonging to another. In other words, an Islamic social order and the representatives of its standards are duty bound to eliminate from society the tendency by individuals to possess what does not belong to them. There has to be a standard of living that guarantees the essentials people need to get on with their lives.

The moral solidarity in an Islamic social environment is enough to preclude any excuse to “steal.” In an Islamic arrangement of social priorities, economic justice is inclusive of distributing resources and wealth fairly and equitably. Parallel to that is the personal acquisition of wealth in a wholesome and moral way. Personal possession, personal property, and personal plenitude are permitted, even encouraged, so long as they do not infringe on the social standard of the Islamic society. When there are moral Muslims who are gainfully employed, commercially prosperous, or otherwise making a “lot of money,” who are accountable to the Islamic conscience, and who honor their Islamic social justice responsibilities, then at that time there will be a source of wealth that will participate in the general well-being of all people in need, all people who are poor, and all people who are the moral counterparts of the prosperous and the rich. “What morality binds, money shall never unbind” is the touchstone of a justice-centered Islamic society.

In a morally energized Islamic social ambiance, central to which are the role of daily and brotherly encounters through the

masjid, neighborhood familiarity, regular *jamā'ah* meetings, and the many other avenues that bring people together, not formally but cordially, any notion of stealing becomes alien. Therefore, when something as odd as a theft occurs, the punishment should be forbidding and disciplinary. In this companionate and nurturing Islamic atmosphere, there is no excuse for a person to dispossess someone else. If ever there were a case of theft it would have to pass through the rigorous process of an Islamic court of law; and if there were any doubt pertaining to the evidence or the circumstances, the *ḥadd* (legal punishment) would have to be dismissed. To contest any evidence brought against him, the accused is guaranteed his full legal rights to a fair trial in a court of law.

But before taking a painstaking look at this penalty, it would be advisable to reconstruct the overall social and legal context to which it belongs. To begin with, Islam is an ideology, a constitution, a bill of rights, and a moral understanding of life, existence, and destiny. The foundation of Islam as well as its principles and tenets are the precursors of every law that comes out of such a well-integrated construct. Therefore, to understand a particular law, such as this one pertaining to convicted thieves, it is first necessary to see where and how it fits into the much larger scope of Islam. To take this law or any other law out of its Islamic frame of reference and setting is futile, inane, and irresponsible. Even if there were some well-intentioned Muslims who want to apply Islamic laws in an un-Islamic society they are to be disclaimed and spurned for their lack of knowledge or zeal to do “what is right” in a nonconductive legal and moral environment. Even this law and other such laws within Islam needed the right amount of socialization and conditioning so as to impart that level of societal maturity whose safeguarding would necessitate a law of this kind taking effect.

The overall social climate where this punishment of thieves belongs is characterized by each person’s right to life, and therefore his right to all necessary means to preserve life. It is the God-given, scripturally endorsed, prophetically taught, and Islamically codified right of every individual born in an Islamic state and society to be able to satisfy his hunger and thirst, to be properly clothed, and to

have a home where there is privacy and comfort. These are livelihood essentials that have to be guaranteed to every native or inhabitant of an Islamic state and society. They can be guaranteed by and through a person's ability to work, as long as he or she is able to do so. The social solidarity in an Islamic society in whichever way that solidarity is expressed — through neighborhood committees, through social welfare organizations, through state agencies, etc. — has to train, qualify, and equip the citizen of an Islamic state with the knowledge, skills, and experience to acquire a talent, profession, or job that will sustain his own as well as his family's well-being. Whatever tools, instruments, technologies, socializing mechanisms, and educational media and programs are necessary for the people's livelihood have to be made available by the society and/or the state.

If a person finds himself “unemployed” or “unoccupied” because there is no longer a need for his job specifications or skills, or if he for health and physical reasons is no longer able to work and be productive — partially or totally, temporarily or permanently — and even if his income from his own job is not enough to support himself and his family then he has recourse to a few supplemental and supportive channels. The first such channel he can rely on is the members of his family who are able to offer financial or monetary assistance. The second channel of support is local solidarity: neighborhood and precinct. The third channel of support concerns the central Islamic Treasury (Bayt al-Māl). He may withdraw whatever he needs to cover day-to-day and season-to-season necessities out of the *zakāh* allotment of the Bayt al-Māl. If there is no money in the Bayt al-Māl, the Islamic authority may seek out the assistance of those who are well-off — the rich and wealthy — in a way that does not infringe on their rights but in a way that touches their conscience.

The all-purpose program of Islam defines the means and avenues for making money. Personal possession and private property are to be acquired in a *halāl* manner. In this way, people who are less fortunate will not hold a grudge or build up resentment against those who are more so. If the less-fortunate public feels that the rich people among them acquired their wealth through less than

halāl means it might give them the inducement to recoup and recover whatever was perceived to be illegally obtained. This propensity by the poor in a highly wealth-polarized society to reclaim whatever was illegally procured by the wealthy will be stimulated by the general notion that an Islamic state is responsible for rolling back poverty and need as much as is possible.

Besides, within a fully developed Islamic society the moral quality and the conscientious level of people will motivate them to look for work, to feel the need to work, and to be gainfully occupied or employed. The public conscience in an Islamic society is anathema to freeloading and sponging off the labor of others; and similarly, it cannot tolerate the notion of stealing another's belongings or property to make money and profit. The public Islamic conscience acts like a safety net for people who are unemployed or underemployed.

When social justice and security in an Islamic society are so concerned with the necessities, needs, and livelihood of its members, the question becomes: then why would people in such a society steal? Obviously a person would not be stealing to satisfy a want or need; or out of necessity. This means that he would only steal because of greed — an excessive desire to acquire or possess more than one needs or deserves, especially material wealth. Therefore, there is no tolerance for such individuals who want to acquire wealth out of greed or for individuals who want to get a hold of wealth without work. This becomes an infringement on the moral and legal standards of this Islamic society in which all other members perform work in order to qualify to receive compensation. Work for payment is the primary moral and legal means to acquire wealth, property, assets or the like; theft is not.

In an Islamic society and state, it is the right of every inhabitant who gains his fortune by moral and legal means — that is, not through usury, defrauding, monopoly, and gouging — and who pays his *zakāh* to live free of the fear that someone may take away his holdings and material possessions. Thus, a thief who steals in this context — having no need or necessity for the pilfered item, and knowing it is a crime to take someone else's property, which was

morally and legally obtained by its owner — has no excuse. And no one should feel sorry for him if he is found guilty without a reasonable doubt in a court of law.

But if there is any dubiousness or uncertainty about a person's motivation or intent then the general procedure is to abort the penalty because of uncertainty and doubt. This may be why 'Umar, the second successor to the Prophet (ﷺ), did not apply this penalty during the Year of Famine. In those circumstances the people were hungry, and this proscription of the *ḥadd* became a matter of public policy.²³³ In another case, less public, this law was suspended when youth in the guardianship of Ibn Ḥāṭib ibn Abī Balta'āh were found guilty of rustling (theft of cattle or sheep) from a man belonging to the tribe of Mazyanah. That is because the evidence in a court of law demonstrated that these youth were subjected to hunger by their overlord. And so the verdict given out was a penalty to the overlord himself, who was fined an amount equivalent to twice the value of the camel these youth stole.²³⁴

Considering this sharp Islamic penalty as part of the larger domain of the Islamic ethical, social, and legal program should discredit, at least in the minds of Muslims, the arguments of those name-callers who are filling the air with aspersions and accusations against Islam. A thoughtful person will come to know that an Islamic society is responsible for social guarantees and personal rights; it does not get involved in the psychology of class polarization because there is no basis for it in real life. An Islamic society is more concerned with prevention of a crime rather than with its punishment. But then once a crime is committed, despite all of the socialization aimed at inhibiting the desire or the need for such an act, it has to be punished with a sentence that corresponds to its criminality.

Before fine-tuning this discussion about the penalty for theft a few words on the Western or secular definition of theft are in order. It may be the appropriation of another person's writings, ideas, or the like, passing them off as one's own — this is called plagiarism. Larceny refers to the theft of another's property. Theft of cattle or sheep, typically by driving them away, is called rustling. Minor thievery or theft of something small or cheap is referred to

as filching, pilferage, or purloining. The theft or misuse of property or funds that have been entrusted to someone is called misappropriation, embezzlement, peculation, defalcation, or conversion.

In the general English usage of the word, *theft* is a popular name for larceny. In semi-legalistic language, larceny itself is the fraudulent taking of corporeal personal property belonging to another, from his possession, or from the possession of some person holding the same for him, without his consent, with intent to deprive the owner of the value of the same, and to appropriate it for the use or benefit of the taker. Some say that theft is a broader term than larceny because it includes swindling and embezzlement and applies, generally, to one who obtains possession of property by unlawful means and thereafter appropriates the property to his own use.

To clear up some of the overarching differences between Islamic terminology and secular Western words on theft, *sariqah* (theft) can simply be said to apply to one person taking away another person's money. Hence for any item to be considered stolen, it must be associated with a tangible monetary value. In this regard, as a general rule based on experience among the competent Islamic scholars of old, an item was not considered stolen unless it had a value exceeding one-fourth of a *dīnār*.²³⁵ The money or item of market value taken has to have been extracted from the actual proprietary retention of its owner. Its possession has to be transferred from owner to "thief." The penalty does not apply to money or property that have been taken/stolen from a "third party," who may have transient trust over the (stolen) item. A maid or a babysitter cannot be considered a thief if she took something of value from her contractor or supervisor's home because she had access to his domain (home); she cannot be considered to have "stolen" an item as she did not violate the item's spacial retention area that would otherwise be considered solely the owner's. A borrower who decides to possess an item he borrowed cannot likewise be considered, in the strict definition of the word, a "thief."

Trees and produce that are in the public realm are considered to be non-stealable items and hence would not incur the theft penalty. According to some *faqīhs*, perishable things such as fruits,

vegetables, legumes, meat, bread, etc. cannot be considered "stolen items." Any money or possessions that are not in their "estate domain," if taken away, will not incur the theft penalty. The item has to belong to its owner outright with no dilution or weakening of the definition of ownership. To this end, when a collaborator or partner takes away from his partner some or all of his share, he too cannot incur the *ḥadd* (theft penalty). The reason is that the "common funds" are shared between or among them; therefore, no one has exclusive rights of ownership. Even a person who steals money from the Bayt al-Māl cannot be punished with the theft penalty because he is a potential recipient of that money. Of course, there is a penalty in all these cases, called *ta'zīr*, but it is not the amputation penalty. The exact nature of this punishment, which is less severe than the *ḥadd*, is left to the discretion of the court or the judge. It could, among other things, take the form of lashing, detention, public reprimand, or counseling. All this depends on particulars and details that will help the judge or magistrate reach the best decision.

If and when the *ḥadd* is due, then the right hand of the felon is to be severed at the wrist. If he is a repeat offender, meaning he has been found guilty of theft on another occasion, then the left foot is severed at the ankle. And beyond that, for he who steals more than twice, there are divergent legal scholarly views on what the punishment should be.

To reiterate, any intervening circumstance may mitigate and terminate the *ḥadd*. Hunger and necessity will dismiss the *ḥadd* penalty. The fact that some wealth belongs even partially to the public also terminates the penalty. Capital sharing does the same. In the event that no witnesses have attested to the crime and the accused thief withdraws his confession, then the *ḥadd* penalty is annulled. If witnesses withdraw their statements, that also dissolves the *ḥadd* punishment. The books of fiqh overflow with information on this subject. Those who are concerned with further details are advised to refer to these *fiqhī* references. Suffice it to say that serious Islamic legal punishments have to be applied when there are no uncertainties, no doubts, and no questions about the evidence that

indicts a criminal. Whenever there is a shadow of a doubt the *ḥadd* does not apply.

It is not easy to think and write about punishment; especially when the punishment is severe. But, easy or not, punishment is the intentional imposition of a penalty on an offender as a consequence of an offense committed. In order to distinguish punishment from revenge it is necessary that the penalty in question be imposed by an authority entitled and deputized to do so; in order to distinguish it from acts of spitefulness and hostility it must be imposed as a consequence of a wrongful act. Punishment is therefore retributive by definition: it is done to a person in return for something he has done, usually in contravention of some rule or practice, which is itself morally justifiable.²³⁶

In a world dominated by the conflict between Judeo-Christian religiosity and secularism, the theological notion of punishment differs markedly from its secular analog. In the religious segments of the Euro-American West, God as guardian of the moral order and creator of even the hurtful structures that sin sets into motion, does not inflict punishments in retribution for wrongful actions, but rather allows them as expressions of God's own holy will. Since every occasion of sinning is in reality a summons to conversion, the refusal of conversion by a free agent amounts to a turning away from God. The resultant, perhaps temporary, loss of God is painful, and hence punishment is in some sense self-imposed. Thus punishment for sin, in the sense captured in civil penal law, is a possible, though only secondary, case of the metaphysical and theological notion of punishment which, strictly speaking, makes punitive agents and agencies superfluous. It follows that while Hell may be understood as the final estrangement and loss of God, it is not to be understood as the most drastic punitive measure of God's vengeance.²³⁷

That punishment is retributive by definition settles no substantive moral questions in the secular/theological schizophrenia of the West. And hence, still relevant is the question of whether there are good moral reasons that justify the practice of deliberately imposing distress on offenders. Is there a need for the practice of punishment? And if so, why is it needed? The answers to these

questions take the form of theories of punishment, each of which purports to give an account of who and what should be punished, as well as the reasons why, and what punishment is appropriate. Three principle justifications may be distinguished.²³⁸

The retribution theory of punishment claims that persons ought to get what they deserve for the wrongfulness of their actions simply because they deserve it. Thus a person must be punished if he has performed an action for which he deserves a penalty and must not be punished over and above what he has deserved, even if doing so would serve as a deterrent. Desert, therefore, is a necessary condition of a justified punishment. It is not, however, sufficient, because of the possibility of forgiveness. Unfortunately, the notion of desert, on which everything hangs here, is excessively vague. To say a punishment is “deserved” seems merely another way of saying that it is *fitting* or *appropriate* that this person get this penalty, without explicating those terms in any satisfactory non-circular way. Perhaps the most promising further account is one which seeks to explain the appropriateness of a punishment in terms of the satisfaction of grievances: it is claimed that a punishment is fitting or deserved if it precisely satisfies the feelings of grievance the offense has given rise to. Clearly, however, such an account provides only an explanation and not a justification of the practice of punishment. That must await a convincing analysis of the concept of desert.²³⁹

The deterrence theory of punishment proceeds along quite different lines. Since punishment involves the deliberate infliction of avoidable suffering on a person it is regarded by some as intrinsically undesirable. Utilitarians, for example, demand that a punishment should serve some useful purpose other than the satisfaction of grievances.²⁴⁰ It should function to deter the offender and others from a repetition of similar offenses, either by incapacitating him or by being sufficient to discourage such action by others. As it stands, however, this intention to deter is consistent with any amount of punishment and any punitive method that will effect deterrence. This may give rise to morally repugnant consequences, such as venturing into the domain of torture, hence, in order to ensure a nec-

essary connection between the seriousness of a crime and the severity of its punishment, deterrence theorists have generally insisted that deterrence must be economical: a punishment is justified if it deters, if the distress caused is not greater than that which would result should the offense have gone unpunished and should there not be other punishment that causes less distress but produces an equally deterrent effect. Obviously, then, a utilitarian justification of punishment is dependent upon the empirically verifiable claim that punishment does actually deter potential offenders and so reduces crime. But if it does depend on that claim, then it seems that many, if not most, current offenders are undergoing punishments of doubtful value. More fundamentally, it may be objected that punishment conceived as deterrence makes possible victimization, both of the innocent and of those who get a heavier penalty than they deserve, when doing so deters others from committing offenses. This consequence contradicts our ordinary moral intuition that a person may not be used merely as a means to someone else's ends, even when that end benefits society as a whole.²⁴¹

A third principal justification of punishment is the reform theory, which claims that a punishment is justified because it provides the opportunity to reform offenders. By aiming to reduce offenses, punishment as reform appears to avoid the objection to retributive punishment that it enforces penalties even when no good results thereof; by insisting that it is offenders who require reform, it avoids the objection to deterrence theory that it legitimates victimization. Nevertheless it remains unclear how the notion of reform could provide the entire justification of the practice of punishment since it depends on the somewhat unlikely claim that punishment itself has a reformatory effect. It is probably best conceived as a part of each of the other justifications, serving to humanize them in important ways.²⁴²

According to some, the history of punishment is the history of a movement from a focus on the body as the suitable object of punishment to a focus on the physical and psychological control of the wrongdoer. Prior to the European Enlightenment in Judeo-Christian common history, breaking the law was conceived of as a

direct attack on the monarch, who was entitled to exact retribution for serious crimes by way of physical torture. This often disproportionate punishment of the criminal subject's body came to be seen as merely vengeful, and new "moral technologies" were devised with the aim not to punish less but to punish better. This meant trying to establish a rational correspondence between kinds of offense and grades of punishment and reflected an attempt by the penal authorities to breed in the criminal not terror but penance. The later aim of the moral transformation of the criminal by the imposition of a regularity on his behavior down to the very movements of his body remains a model for contemporary secular penal institutions.²⁴³

The shift from bodily punishment to control over the wrongdoer's activity reflects changing views about who or what is wronged when a crime is committed and about the efficacy of different forms of punishment. When crime came to be regarded not as an attack on the sovereign or as an affront to God represented by the divinely appointed monarch, but rather as a breach of the social contract, which jeopardized society as a whole, new methods of punishment, aimed at redressing the wrong done to the community and restoring the criminal to his proper place within it, had to be put in place. Thus the goal of social contract theory and of utilitarianism combined to produce a degree of social control unknown in traditional societies. Still seen today, the logical development of this coalition was the "surveillance" model of the penal institution, represented in the horror of Bentham's panopticon, in which the offender becomes the subject of permanent inspection by the authorities.²⁴⁴

The social practice of punishing individuals for offenses faces various challenges today in a world with a Qur'an. For example, the increasing complexity of social developments and the controls necessary to regulate them, the increase in numbers of those prosecuted and the move away from purely physical punishments, all mean that the practice of punishment stands in as much need of rationalization and justification as it ever did. Yet the difficulties and weaknesses of each theory of punishment considered may suggest that each, in and of itself, cannot serve as a justification. Since punishment must be justified if it is not to be simply arbitrary, recent thinking has tended

to combine the elements of each that best serve social ends, such as the stability of society.²⁴⁵

However, this approach must be seen as highly questionable. For it is crucial to be clear about which principles are being employed and to keep them distinct, if only because the different approaches outlined will have very different implications for penal policy: even though retributivist and deterrence principles may occasionally agree upon a particular punishment, for instance, they are more likely to produce radically different decisions. For that very reason it is unacceptable to “mix” the justifications and claim, for example, that the purpose of punishment is both to do what the offender deserves and to deter him and others from so acting in the future. If, for example, a retributivist allows in considerations based on deterrence then he is being unjust by his own standards; for instance, he believes a criminal deserves a particular punishment for his offense, but he then increases the amount of punishment the criminal gets in order to deter others. Thus the application of the two principles, or a combination of them, will not have the same consequences for an offender — and, if they conflict, which one is going to be applied to a particular case? This objection, some might say, is merely a pointless insistence on following rules for the sake of it. But in fact the objection raises an important issue: given that punishment is not merely a burden like other social burdens, which are to be distributed as justly as possible, but is itself an instrument of social justice, then an insistence on the consistent application of the principles governing it is not merely an insistence on following rules whatever they are. It is an insistence on following a rule of justice. And if justice mandates a certain practice and, as is affirmed, justice claims are indefeasible, then it follows that every offender has an absolute analog in a particular and identifiable form of punishment.²⁴⁶

In a judicial world with no light from above there is also a theory of human motivation and action which, if true, undermines both retributive and reform theories of punishment, and thus the very practice of punishment itself. If public opinion can be convinced of determinism, then no human being is ultimately respon-

sible for his actions and, therefore, deserves neither blame nor praise. This poses a significant challenge to retributive justifications of punishment simply because it cannot be right to punish someone for something when he could not have done otherwise. Indeed, this view is already given some credence in the courts and is reflected in judgements that take into account factors such as social disadvantage. But the logical consequence of the determinist's claim that nothing is finally deserved is that retributivism should be abandoned as a justification for punishment, for even if it is acceptable in principle there is nothing to which it can be applied in practice. Punishment as deterrence, however, may be justified even if determinism is true because its aim is simply to alter the ways in which it is in people's interests to act, rather than to assign responsibility. In this way, deterrence theory is supported by the theory of determinism because, though using different arguments, both make the notion of desert redundant. It nevertheless faces the serious problems and objections noted.²⁴⁷

What justification of punishment society takes up is a matter of the recommendation of a certain policy. That recommendation depends upon moral theory. But in dealing with matters of justice — since punishment is an instrument of social justice — some moral theories are more adequate than others in providing justifications in the secular world. If punishment is just, then it must proceed from a proper conception of justice, which limits the role of “benefit to society” and which takes account of socio-economic factors.

What is to be found in Allah's (ﷻ) clear words is a solace and reassurance. From our human experience, and particularly due to the competing and overlapping theories in the secular world, responsible people should come to understand they will not have one mind on the issue of punishment, especially when they refuse to consider the unifying information coming from Allah (ﷻ). The secularists develop conflicting theories, formulate irreconcilable arguments, and then use society and its people as guinea pigs, fodder for their social experiments, as they apply whichever form of punishment they choose, still not being comfortable with what they are doing. Muslims, on the other hand, should only feel con-

fidant doing what is right as they have the moral support and mental clarity that come from Allah's (ﷻ) shining words.

What is lacking in this area is hard data on a contrast between societies that function without any Qur'anic guidance and the crime rate therein on the one hand, and Qur'anic societies that have taken their Islamic values and morals all the way to their legal ends and the crime rate therein on the other. But as is the case in a secular world with secular governments, such numbers and figures do not exist, nor does anyone have the motivation to embark on a study to produce them. This much is to be expected as today's Muslims do not even have Islamic social and governmental structures that are capable of extending Islamic and Qur'anic morality into its legal framework.

Before winding down this lesson, the important issue of repentance (*tawbah*) relieving a thief of the *ḥadd* penalty needs to be considered. Even though there is a broad range of opinions on this point, most of the scholarly views settle on the position that it should relieve him of the penalty if he is able to return what he unlawfully and immorally took. The reason this appears to be the case is that in the previous lesson above, forgiveness and amnesty are offered to the more serious criminals who wage war on Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) if they repent before they are apprehended for their serious crimes. This amnesty within Allah's (ﷻ) overall architecture of mercy is all the more applicable to lesser crimes such as theft. Corroborating this at the end of this legal lesson, Allah (ﷻ) says,

But as for him who repents after having thus done wrong, and makes amends, behold, Allah will accept his repentance: verily, Allah is much-forgiving, compassionate. Do you not know that Allah's is the dominion over the heavens and the earth? He chastises whom He wills, and He forgives whom He wills, for Allah has the power to will anything (5:39–40).

This is a stern reminder in a serious context of who owns and controls all these trifling and transient possessions. This fact should

be deeply embedded in the personal thoughts of individuals and in the public mind of societies: the Creator of life and world is its Owner and the One who determines the course of life and living. He is the Authority on things trivial and things terrestrial. He decides the concluding days of an individual's short lifespan and the final days of humanity when ownership ceases to exist.

In conclusion, a final reading of the previous *āyāt* puts events and their moral overtones on a continuum that begins with the crime of a brother dispossessing his brother of life, then goes to a human tendency to dispossess Allah (ﷻ) of His position as the Lawmaker and Lawgiver above humanity and for humanity, and then ends with an act of dispossessing another individual of his worldly belongings. All of these acts of dispossession correspond to expiating penalties. Some of these penalties are an act of God, others are a combined act of God and man, and the last is an act of man on the authority of God.

Endnotes

- 1 There have been narratives indicating this *ayaḥ* was revealed on the day of Ghadīr Khumm (reported by Ibn Mardawayh on the authority of Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī); Abū Hurayrah says it was revealed on the 18th of Dhū al-Ḥijjah when the Prophet (ﷺ) was on his way back from his Final Pilgrimage.

Other narratives mention that the first part of *Sūrah al-Mā'idah* was revealed at Miná during the Prophet's (ﷺ) final year, that is, the year of his Farewell Pilgrimage. One narrative even cites the whole *sūrah* being revealed during the Final Pilgrimage, while the Prophet (ﷺ) was in transit between Makkah and Madinah (al-Bayhaqī in his book *Shi'ab al-Īmān*).^a

a Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Qur'ān al-Ḥakīm (better known as Tafsīr al-Manār)*, Volume 6. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Ma'rifah, 1414AH), p. 116.

Day of 'Arafah – the mass assembly of people during the annual congregation of the Hajj is *Yawm 'Arafah* (also known as *Yawm 'Arafāt*), which is the 9th day of the month of Dhū al-Ḥijjah — the day before 'Īd al-Aḍḥā. It is the day in which the Hajj pilgrims stand on the plateau of 'Arafāt and express their *du'ā'*, and it is the most important ritual of Hajj — a pilgrim's Hajj is not complete without him/her observing this day.

Ḥajjah al-Wadāʿ (Farewell Pilgrimage) – the last and only Hajj pilgrimage Muhammad (ﷺ) participated in (10AH), after he became a prophet. He led the pilgrims from Makkah through Miná and up to the plateau of ʿArafāt, and then to Wādī ʿAraṇāḥ, where they all stopped and he delivered his Farewell Sermon to over 100,000 attendees.

- 2 Muḥammad al-Ṭāhir ibn ʿĀshūr, *Al-Tahrīr wa-al-Tanwīr (better known as Tafsīr ibn ʿĀshūr)*, Volume 5. (Beirut, Lebanon: Muʿassasah al-Tārīkh al-ʿArabī, 1420AH), p. 5 (originally reported in the book *Aḥkām ibn al-Faras*).

سورة المائدة تدعى في ملكوت السماوات المنفذة.

- 3 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr fī al-ʿAqīdah wa-al-Sharīʿah wa-al-Manhaj*, Volume 6. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-Muʿāṣir, 1411AH), p. 60.

يا أيها الناس إن سورة المائدة آخر ما نزل فأحلوا حلالها وحرموا حرامها.

- 4 Narrated by ʿAbdullāh ibn ʿUmar, and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Tirmidhī, al-Ḥākim, al-Nisāʿī, and al-Bayhaqī.

آخر سورة نزلت المائدة والفتح.

- 5 **iḥrām** – state in which one is prohibited to engage in certain activities that are lawful at other times, and in which the ceremonies of ʿUmrah and Hajj are performed. As one begins to assume this state, he expresses mentally and orally his intention to do so for the purpose of performing ʿUmrah or Hajj. While in this state, the male pilgrim is required to wear only two sheets of white, unstitched cloth: the *izār*, worn below one’s waist; and the *ridāʿ*, worn around the upper part of the body. The female pilgrim is required to maintain her *ḥijāb*, but with simple, unadorned garments. As the state of *iḥrām* is entered, the pilgrims normally recite the *talbiyah*.

talbiyah – literally, *following, obeying; observance, compliance*. This is the invocation recited by Muslim pilgrims while they are in the state of *iḥrām*: *labbayka allāhumma labbayk, labbayka lā sharīka laka labbayk, inna al-ḥamda wa-al-niʿmata laka wa-al-mulk, lā sharīka lak* (Here I am at Your service, O Allah, here I am at Your service; here I am at Your service, the One who has no rival [in authority and divinity], here I am at Your service; indeed praise and blessings are Yours as well as dominion; there is no competitor [in governance and dominion] against You).

- 6 **Abū 'Abdillāh Muḥammad al-Qurṭubī** (80–130AH, 1272CE) – Mālikī scholar from Cordoba, who is famous for his commentary on the Qur'an, which contains a very great number of hadiths, many of which are not mentioned by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī.
- 7 **Ṣulḥ al-Ḥudaybiyah (Ḥudaybiyah Non-belligerency Pact)** – the name refers to a water well on an open space in proximity to the Ḥaram and the sacred territory around Makkah. It is celebrated as the village where the Prophet (ﷺ), arriving from Madinah, negotiated a ceasefire with the Qurayshī *mushriks* of Makkah. In the 6th year of the Hijrah (forced relocation), the armistice was declared when the Prophet (ﷺ) agreed not to enter Makkah that year and to defer his visit to the Ḥaram until the following year. According to the terms of this agreement between the Muslims of Madinah and the *kāfirs* of Makkah, the Muslims would not be allowed to enter Makkah with any weapons, except as may be permitted to a traveler.
- 8 In the translation of *āyah* 5:2, the term *garlanded offerings* is inclusive of *al-hady(u)* and *al-qalā'id*. Literally, in a flock or herd of domestic animals (sheep, goats, etc.), *al-hady(u)* refers to the lead animal and *al-qalā'id* refers to those who follow the lead; however, with regard to a sacrificial offering, either can be chosen and decorated with necklaces or wreaths.
- 9 Narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah and Anas ibn Mālik, and recorded by al-Ḥākim.
- المسلمون عند شروطهم.
- 10 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and recorded by al-Bazzār and al-Ṭabarānī.
- كل شرط ليس في كتاب الله فهو باطل وإن كان مئة شرط.
- 11 Narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and Muslim.
- من عمل عملا ليس عليه أمرنا فهو رد.
- 12 **Bay'ah al-'Aqabah al-Thāniyah** (1BH, one year before the Hijrah) – delegation from Madinah that came to Makkah during the last of the Prophet's (ﷺ) 13 years there, right before the Hijrah. The members of the delegation, of which there were approximately 73, solemnly and formally promised,

To follow Muhammad (ﷺ) by listening to him and obeying him in times of vigor and in times of indolence, to follow him by spending

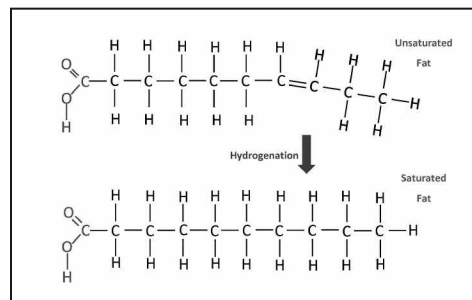
wealth in times of plentifulness and in times of scarceness, to follow him in authorizing the self-evident meritorious [acts, policies] and in deconstructing the self-evident abhorrent [acts, policies], and to take a stand for Allah (ﷻ) without fearing anyone’s disapproval; and to support and protect Muhammad (ﷺ) if he were to move to Madinah as they would be protective of their own lives, their spouses, and their families. And for that we shall be compensated with Paradise [in the life to come].^a

- a Muḥammad Abū Zuhrah, *Khātam al-Nabiyyīn, Volume 1*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Fikr al-‘Arabī, year of publication unspecified), p. 499 (originally narrated by ‘Ubādah ibn al-Ṣāmit and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal).

13 **Bay‘ah al-Riḍwān** (6AH) – a pledge that was sworn to the Prophet (ﷺ) by the Ṣahābah prior to the Treaty of Ḥudaybiyah. The pledge, sworn under a tree, was given for the purpose of taking military action against the Quraysh of Makkah for the rumored death of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) emissary, ‘Uthmān ibn ‘Affān. The pledge was successful in demonstrating the Islamic resolve of the Muslims to the Quraysh, who soon released ‘Uthmān and escorted him with their own ambassador, Suhayl ibn ‘Amr, to negotiate the terms of a ceasefire between Makkah and Madinah. The following *āyah* from *Sūrah al-Fath* was revealed on the occasion of the pledge, **“Indeed, well-pleased was Allah with the committed Muslims when they pledged their allegiance to you [O Muhammad] under that tree, for He knew what was in their hearts; and so He bestowed inner peace upon them from on high, and rewarded them with [the glad tidings of] a victory soon to come” (48:18).**

14 A beast of prey is defined by some as meat-eating (carnivorous) animals and by others as animals that attack human beings and other animals.

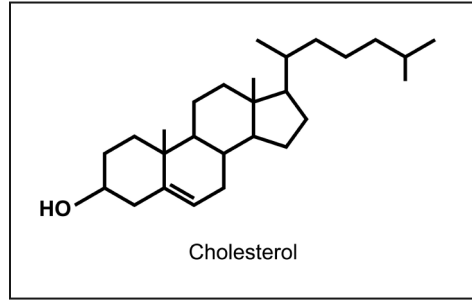
15 **saturated fat** – fat that contains a high percentage of saturated fatty acids and exists as a solid at room temperature. In chemistry, *saturation* refers to fatty acid molecules in which the carbon atoms are bonded to a maximum number of hydrogen atoms (“filled up”). Typical sources of saturated fat are animal fat, as found in pork, beef, veal, and lamb; meat products; milk; eggs; butter; and products like ice cream, and chocolate. Certain



unsaturated fat are vegetable oils, such as olive oil, canola oil, and soybean oil.

plant oils are also saturated, including coconut, palm, and palm kernel oils. Unsaturated fat (vegetable oils) can be converted to saturated fat by a chemical process called *hydrogenation*, and these appear on the market as vegetable shortening.

cholesterol – a waxy lipid derived from food and from synthesis in the liver. Both cholesterol and fat are classified as lipids because they do not dissolve in water. However, cholesterol differs from fat because it does not contain fatty acids and cannot be oxidized in the body for energy.

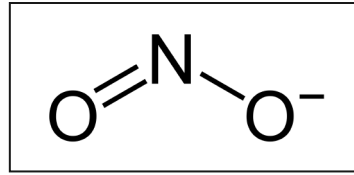


Whereas, fat represents the body's major energy reserve, cholesterol is the substance from which all steroid hormones are derived. Though cholesterol has the reputation of an unwanted, even dangerous substance, all cells of the body require cholesterol because it is an essential constituent of all cell membranes. Cholesterol forms sex hormones and hormones of the adrenal cortex, which regulate water and electrolyte balance, as well as the metabolism of carbohydrate, fat and protein. In addition, the skin converts cholesterol to vitamin D, and the liver converts it to bile salts, to digest and absorb fat. Cholesterol leaves the body primarily through bile salts.

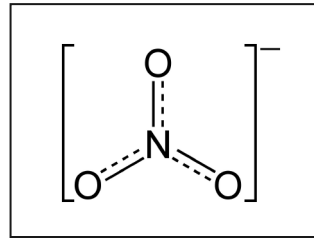
Cholesterol is not an essential nutrient because the body makes most of the cholesterol it needs. Liver synthesis produces approximately 50% of the cholesterol manufactured in the body. Insulin increases glucose utilization by tissues and stimulates cholesterol synthesis in the liver after a high carbohydrate meal.

- 16 **sausage** – a seasoned, ground meat product usually containing high levels of sodium and fat, and packed in a casing. The term *sausage* is derived from the Latin *salsicius*, meaning *seasoned with salt*. Most sausage contains highly seasoned, finely ground pork and/or beef, and table salt. Any meat from a USDA-inspected carcass can be used to make sausage and animal fat can be added; thus blood sausage is made from blood, pork fat, and seasoning. The final product may be cured (smoked) and dried or semi-dried. Dry and semi-dry sausage may contain nitrites as preservatives, which have been linked to an increased risk of stomach cancer if consumed in large amounts. Fresh sausage is made from raw meat and must be cooked. Semi-dry sausage has generally been smoked, whereas, dry sausage may or may not be smoked. Examples include bologna, braunschweiger, frankfurter, head cheese, knackwurst, liverwurst, salami, souse, and Vienna sausage.

- 17 **nitrite (potassium nitrite, KNO_2 ; sodium nitrite, NaNO_2)** – common food additive found in processed meats. Nitrites are added to “cured” meats, such as luncheon meats (liverwurst, salami, bologna), bacon, ham, and hot dogs to prevent them from turning gray and to create a meatier flavor. Cured white meat does not need a pink color, so nitrite is not usually added to it. Nitrite decomposes to nitric oxide, which reacts with pigments in meat to form an appealing pink color. Nitrites can inhibit bacterial growth, and one argument for continuing to use sodium nitrite is that it prevents spoilage and botulism. Dry cured meat may contain 283mg/lb of nitrite, while chopped meat can contain 71mg/lb. Dietary vegetables supply 0.2mg daily, while cured meats supply several milligrams daily. Until the late 1970s, nitrite was needlessly added to baby food; but yielding to consumer pressure, baby food manufacturers have stopped this practice. Bacterial action on nitrate in saliva and in the intestine can produce several milligrams of nitrite daily.



nitrate (potassium nitrate, KNO_3 ; sodium nitrate, NaNO_3) – inorganic, nitrogen-containing ion used as a food additive for processed meat and meat products. Meat can, according to US law, legally contain 91mg/lb of added sodium or potassium nitrate. Chopped meat can contain 778mg/lb, and dry cured meat can contain 991mg/lb. Its role in meat is not clear, though nitrate seems to provide a reservoir for bacterial conversion to nitrite, which acts as an antimicrobial agent. Nitrite can be converted to a potential cancer-causing agent called nitrosoamine.

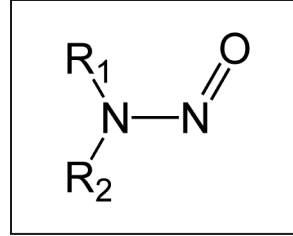


Nitrate occurs naturally in food. Green vegetables are a major source of nitrates with beets, spinach, and lettuce being likely sources. The level depends upon the plant species and variety, the part of the plant consumed, the stage of maturity, levels of fertilizers in the soil, and the rate of plant growth. The estimated/typical daily intake of nitrate is 6mg from vegetables, 9.4mg from cured meats, 2mg from bread, and 1.4mg from fruit and fruit juices. Drinking water supplies an average of 0.7mg daily. High levels of nitrate can occur in well water in rural areas, due to contamination from feed lots and run-off from fertilizer-affected fields. For water, a limit of 10mg/L of nitrate has been set by the US Public Health Service.

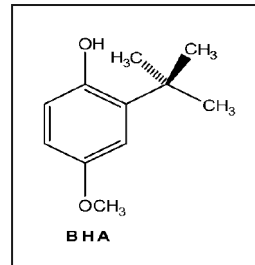
Nitrate in well water used to prepare formula can be hazardous for infants. Up to six months after birth, stomach acid production in infants is low, which permits bacteria in the intestine to convert nitrate to nitrite. Nitrite can disable infants' hemoglobin and induce a condition called

methemoglobinemia, in which nitrite-modified hemoglobin cannot transport adequate oxygen. In older children nitrate is absorbed in the stomach before it can reach intestinal bacteria that could reduce it to nitrite. Infants drink proportionately much more water (in formula) than adults do, and their hemoglobin is also more sensitive to nitrite attack. Formula prepared from distilled water is said to be safer.

- 18 **nitrosoamine** – cancer-causing agent formed from the common food additive, nitrite. Nitrite is a common additive in highly processed meat products and cured meats. Mice, rats, hamsters, pigs, dogs, monkeys, and fish develop cancer when exposed to several nitrosoamines, which can modify DNA in test-tube experiments. In the stomach and intestine they can react with amines, which are nitrogen-containing compounds present in many foods. Nitrosoamines have been detected in cooked sausage and bacon, tobacco smoke, cured meats, pesticides, smoked fish, powdered milk, alcoholic drinks and several types of industrial plants, as well as new car interiors. The level of exposure constituting a health hazard to humans is not divulged by the industrial and scientific communities. Vitamin C and garlic inhibit nitrosoamine formation.

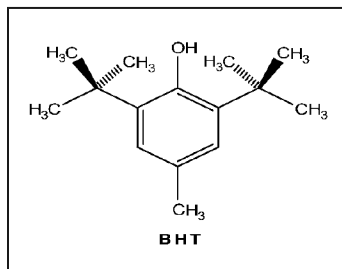


- 19 **BHA (butylated hydroxyanisole)** – very common synthetic antioxidant used in the United States since 1947 to retard rancidity in vegetable oils and foods containing them. BHA destroys free radicals (highly reactive chemical compounds) before they can break down the fat. Therefore this antioxidant is extensively employed to extend the shelf life of many processed foods containing fat or oil, such as baked goods, chips, breakfast cereals, pork sausages, as well as active dry yeast and some chewing gums. The average American consumes several kilograms of BHA daily from these sources.



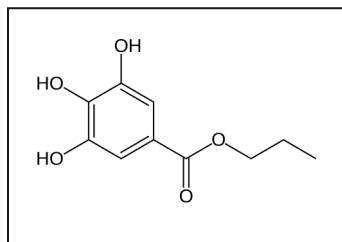
BHA is relatively “non-toxic.” Most animal studies indicate it to be somewhat safe, although a 1982 study suggested it may cause cancer in experimental animals at very high dosages. A review committee concluded that the cancer risk is sketchy and recommended that BHA not be banned, pending further investigation. Huge amounts of BHA (0.25– 0.5 % of diet) cause abnormal developmental behavior in the offspring of treated animals. In some cases it may cause allergic reactions.

BHT (butylated hydroxytoluene) – a synthetic antioxidant used in the United States since 1954. Like BHA, BHT helps prevent rancidity in fats, vegetable oils, and processed foods that contain them. Both BHA and BHT block the oxidation of polyunsaturated fatty acids by free radicals, which are highly reactive molecules with unpaired electrons that attack the double bonds of unsaturated fatty acids found in oils. Free radical oxidation creates off-flavor odors and breakdown products that are potentially damaging to cells. When included in the packaging material itself, BHT (and BHA) can migrate into the contents such as breakfast cereal, powdered milk and mixes, in addition to baked goods and chips. The United States FDA allows BHT and BHA to be added to raw and cooked meat toppings for pizzas and meatballs. A mixture of synthetic antioxidants is often more effective than single preservatives. Therefore many products contain BHA, BHT, and propyl gallate — a third, less safe antioxidant. BHT is less expensive than BHA but is unstable when heated during pasteurization and baking.



The average American consumes 5–10mg of BHT daily. BHT accumulates in human tissues, though the long-term significance of this is unknown. The safety of BHT has been questioned, and some individuals are allergic to it. It is known that BHT induces certain liver detoxifying enzymes, but this is viewed as a mixed blessing because an increased level of these enzymes can destroy some toxic materials, but they can also transform others into carcinogens (cancer-causing agents). The relationship of BHT to cancer is said to be murky in some establishmentarian circles. Several reports suggest that BHT forestalls cancer in experimental animals. Other studies suggest it has no effect; still others conclude BHT can cause cancer. Rats fed 0.1–0.25% BHT diets (about 10–20 times the typical American diet) developed behavioral changes. The United States FDA proposed removing BHT from the generally recognized as safe (GRAS) list of food additives; however, it has not been classified as a regulated food additive. In view of the concern about safety, some companies omit BHT from processed foods.

propyl gallate – a synthetic food additive used as a preservative to increase shelf life. Propyl gallate acts as an antioxidant to reduce unwanted oxidations that cause fat decomposition (rancidity), leading to altered color and texture in foods. It is used with BHA and BHT to preserve fat, lard, vegetable oil, meat products, soup



bases, chewing gum and cold breakfast cereals. Propyl gallate is often used in food packaging; it can migrate from the package lining into foods like cereals and potato flakes. The safety of propyl gallate has been questioned because it is linked to tumors in experimental animals.

rancidity – the process by which fats and oils become oxidized through exposure to air. Rancid fat has an off flavor and disagreeable odor. In meat, iron-containing protein reacts with oxygen to produce free radicals that cause fat decomposition accompanied by loss of flavor. The oxidation of fats usually occurs spontaneously, though slowly, at room temperature. Exposure to heat, light, and trace metals like iron greatly speeds the reaction with oxygen. Rancidity lowers the content of other lipids, including vitamin A and vitamin E. Thus rancid foods are less wholesome and less nutritious than fresh foods.

At a molecular level, oxygen and reactive chemical compounds called free radicals can attack unsaturated fatty acids in fats and oils. Unsaturated fatty acids contain double bonds that lack pairs of hydrogen atoms. These bonds are fragile and susceptible to chemical modification, leading to the formation of peroxides, which are potent intermediates in fat oxidation. Lipid peroxides can trigger inflammation, and spontaneously decompose into more free radicals plus fragments that are both cytotoxic (cell killing) and mutagenic (causing mutations). Most cells contain an antioxidant enzyme system called glutathione peroxidase that converts unstable oxidized lipids (lipid peroxides) to harmless fatty acids that can be used for energy.

A growing family of food additives called antioxidants is used to control or prevent oxidation of processed vegetable oils and processed foods containing fats and oils in order to increase their stability during storage. Ascorbic acid (vitamin C) and vitamin E prevent oxidative damage, and additives like citric acid can bind metal ions that could otherwise catalyze a reaction with oxygen. Synthetic antioxidants, including BHA, BHT, and propyl gallate, are designed to disarm free radicals before they can cause damage. Because of the safety concerns raised about synthetic antioxidants, the food industry has studied naturally occurring antioxidants that can be added to foods and fats and oils to stabilize them. As an example, rosemary extracts have proven effective in stabilizing vegetable oils.

- 20 Dr. Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*. (New York, New York: Facts on File, Inc., 1997), p. 265.

vegetable shortening – a form of saturated fat, prepared from vegetable oil, that resembles animal fat. A major advantage of vegetable shortening is that, unlike lard, butter or beef fat, it does not contain cholesterol. However, vegetable shortening does contain the same high calories as butter or lard.

Vegetable shortening is produced by the chemical process called *hydrogenation*. This process adds hydrogen atoms to unsaturated fatty acids, thereby converting naturally liquid fat (oils) to solid fats with varying degrees of stiffness. Usually several different fats are blended to achieve the desired consistency of a shortening. Corn oil, cottonseed oil, soybean oil, olive oil, palm oil, peanut oil, safflower oil, and sesame oil may be combined. Shortening, like other hydrogenated vegetable oils, contains trans-fatty acids as a byproduct of manufacture. The long-term safety of trans-fatty acids has been questioned. A diet high in saturated fat is linked to an increased risk of heart disease and cancer.

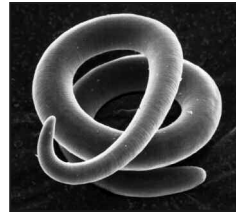
cottonseed oil – a polyunsaturated oil derived from cotton. Cotton is not classified as a food, therefore pesticide use in its cultivation is not as restricted as for vegetables, hence cottonseed oil may be more highly contaminated. This oil contains 52% polyunsaturated fatty acids, 18% monounsaturated fatty acids, and 26% saturated fatty acids. The ratio of unsaturated to saturated fatty acids is 2.7:1. The higher degree of saturation makes cottonseed oil less prone to oxidation and rancidity than soybean, corn, or safflower oils. It is thus a useful additive in salad dressings and in processed foods such as chips, where shelf life stability is important to the commercial side of the market. Like all oils and fat, cottonseed oil provides 9cal/g.

peanut oil – nearly 70% of the world peanut crop is used for oil product, and peanut oil accounts for 20% of the total vegetable oil consumption. Peanuts are rich in oil: 100 pounds of whole nuts yields 32 pounds of oil, and small podded varieties contain 50% oil. The oil contains 76–82% unsaturated fatty acids, that is, fatty acids with double bonds. Monounsaturated fatty acids represent 48.4% of the total; polyunsaturated fatty acids, 33.6%; and saturated fatty acids, 18%. Peanut oil is used as a cooking oil because it has a high smoke point (that is, the temperature at which the oil is decomposed and where possibly toxicological relevant compounds are formed). The oil is also used in salad dressing, vegetable shortening, and margarine.

soybean oil – one of the most widely used vegetable oils. Over 90% of the oil is used for food processing, cooking oil, and margarine. Solvents are generally used to extract oil from cracked seeds after heating. The oil must first be degummed, then bleached, partially hydrogenated to increase stability and extend its shelf life, and finally deodorized. Because of its high content of polyunsaturated fatty acids (with multiple hydrogen-deficient linkages), soybean oil is classified as a polyunsaturated oil. Soybean oil contains linoleic acid, an essential fatty acid, up to 55%; oleic acid, a monounsaturated fatty acid, up to 25%; and saturated fatty acids, about 15%. Soybean oil is often used in cooking and in processed foods.

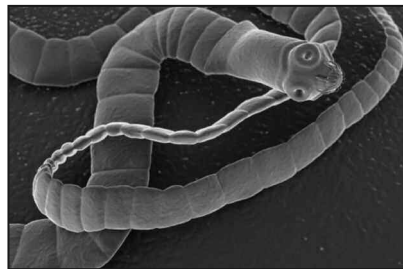
coconut oil – a tropical oil obtained from coconut meat and used extensively as an additive in processed foods. Dried coconut pulp, called copra, is refined to produce this oil. Coconut oil is especially common in commercially prepared cookies, chips, and baked goods, as well as in non-dairy creamer. A food label listing only “100 percent vegetable oil” will likely be high in coconut, palm, or palm kernel oils – all classified as saturated fat. Coconut oil is 92% saturated, one of the most saturated of dietary fats and oils. By comparison, butterfat is 65% saturated.

- 21 *Trichinella spiralis* – a nematode parasite, it occurs in rodents, pigs, horses, bears, and humans, and is responsible for the disease trichinosis. Sometimes referred to as the “pork worm,” as it is found commonly in undercooked pork products, it is one of the most widespread and clinically important parasites in the world.



- 22 Tapeworm infection is an intestinal disease caused by one of several species of tapeworms, including *Taenia saginata* (beef tapeworm), *Taenia solium* (pork tapeworm), and *Diphyllobothrium latum* (fish tapeworm). Tapeworms are large, flat worms that live in the intestine and can grow 15 to 30 feet in length. Egg-bearing sections of the worm (proglottids) are passed in the stool. If untreated human waste is released into the environment, the eggs may be ingested by intermediate hosts, such as pigs, cattle, or in the case of fish tapeworms, small crustaceans (aquatic arthropod), which are in turn ingested by fish. The eggs hatch in the intermediate host, then the larvae invade the intestinal wall and are carried through the bloodstream to skeletal muscle and other tissues, where they form cysts. People acquire the parasite by eating the cysts in raw or undercooked meat or fish. The cysts hatch and develop into adult worms, which latch onto the person’s intestinal wall. The worms then grow in length.

People may also act as an intermediate host for the pork tapeworm, *Taenia solium*. Pork tapeworm eggs reach the stomach when a person swallows them in food or water contaminated with human feces or from contact with the unclean hands of a person infected with adult worms. The eggs may also reach the stomach



when proglottids are regurgitated from the intestine. Once the larvae are released, they penetrate the intestinal wall and travel to muscles, internal organs, the brain, or tissue under the skin, where they form cysts (cysticerci). This form of the disease is called cysticercosis.

Although tapeworms in the intestine usually cause no symptoms, some people experience upper abdominal discomfort, diarrhea, and loss of appetite. Occasionally, a person with tapeworms may feel a piece of the worm move out through the anus. Rarely, tapeworms acquired from fish cause anemia. Cysts in the brain and meninges (the tissues covering the brain) in people with cysticercosis may cause inflammation, resulting in headache, confusion, other neurologic symptoms, and commonly, seizures.

A doctor diagnoses intestinal tapeworm infection by finding worm segments or eggs in a stool sample. Cysticercosis is more difficult to diagnose; however, cysts in the brain can be seen with computed tomography (CT) or magnetic resonance imaging (MRI) scanning. Blood tests for antibodies to the pork tapeworm also are helpful.

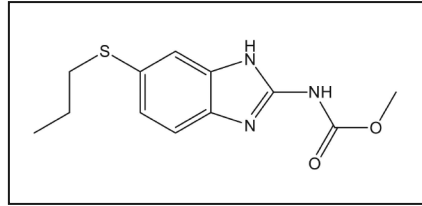
- 23 **corticosteroids** – synthetic drugs that closely resemble cortisol, a hormone produced naturally by the adrenal glands. In common parlance, corticosteroids are the ones that are simply identified as “steroids,” however, they are not the same as the male hormone-related steroid compounds that athletes often use to “enhance performance.” Some corticosteroid medications include cortisone, prednisone, and methylprednisolone.

Steroids work by decreasing inflammation and reducing the activity of the immune system. Inflammation is a body defense mechanism in which its white blood cells and other chemicals try to protect against infection from bacteria, viruses, and foreign substances. In certain diseases, however, it is thought that inflammation begins to work against the body’s tissues, causing damage. Signs of inflammation include redness, warmth, swelling, and pain. Steroids reduce the production of chemicals that cause inflammation, thereby helping to keep tissue damage as low as possible. Steroids also reduce the activity of the immune system by affecting the way white blood cells work.

Possible side effects of steroid use depend on the dose, type of steroid, and length of treatment. Some side effects are more serious than others. Some of the more common ones, though they do not occur in all users, include increased appetite and weight gain, sudden mood swings, muscle weakness, blurred vision, increased growth of body hair, easy bruising, lower resistance to infection, swollen “puffy” face, acne, osteoporosis, worsening of diabetes, high blood pressure, stomach irritation, nervousness and restlessness, difficulty in sleeping, cataracts or glaucoma, and water retention.

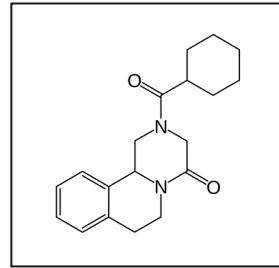
albendazole – treats hydatid disease and other infections caused by tapeworms; may also be used to treat infections caused by roundworms, hookworms, and pinworms. It belongs to a class of drugs called anthelmintics (anti-worm medication). Common side effects may include stomach pain, nausea, and vomiting; dizziness and spinning sensation; headache; and temporary hair loss.

Albendazole should not be used during pregnancy, unless there is no alternate treatment. It is not known whether this medicine will harm an unborn baby. Effective birth control to prevent pregnancy is generally recom-



mended while taking this medicine and for at least one month after treatment ends. It is not known whether albendazole passes into breast milk or if it could harm a nursing baby; hence nursing mothers should only use the drug if there is no other alternative and under strict monitoring.

praziquantel – also an anti-worm medication, it prevents newly hatched insect larvae (worms) from growing or multiplying in the body. Praziquantel is used to treat infections caused by *Schistosoma* worms, which enter the body through skin that has come into contact with contaminated water. *Schistosoma* worms are found in Africa, South America, Middle Eastern countries, the Caribbean, and parts of Asia. It is



also used to treat infection with liver flukes, caused by a type of worm found in East Asia. This worm enters the body through ingestion of contaminated fish. Praziquantel should not be used to treat parasitic infections in the eye.

For those suffering from kidney disease, heart disease, liver disease, or seizures due to epilepsy, praziquantel should be used with caution and always in the presence of a servicing professional. Praziquantel has been known to impair thinking and reaction times; and hence those taking the drug are advised to be careful driving or doing anything that requires alertness, like using heavy equipment. Praziquantel can pass into breast milk and may harm a nursing baby. Some of the more common side effects include a tired feeling; headache and dizziness; nausea and upset stomach; mild fever; and mild skin rash.

- 24 **kosher (kashruth)** – regulations determining the Jewish dietary laws. The basic laws in the Pentateuch are developed in the Oral Law and by rabbinic regulation. The Talmudic tractate Hullin deals largely with the laws of kosher as does Yoreh Deah (the second part of the Shulkhan Arukh code, the standard legal code of Judaism, compiled in the mid-1500s CE by Sephardic Rabbi Joseph Caro). According to these laws, only a small proportion of living creatures are permitted to be eaten, and every precaution is taken to avoid the consumption of blood or the partaking of meat with milk products. Other prohibited foods include bread from which the dough-offer-

ing has not been separated, first-year fruit, and milk derived from a prohibited animal. Special Passover kosher laws prohibit the eating throughout the festival of leaven and leaven products. The word, *kosher*, is a verb or adjective, whereas *kashruth* is a noun.

- 25 **convenience food** – food that has been precooked or processed to minimize meal preparation at home. Convenience foods include cold breakfast cereals, powdered soft drinks, prepared foods to be heated at home, canned foods, and frozen foods (frozen entrees like pizza and tacos, and TV dinners). Consumers may choose among gourmet microwave dinners; foods in pouches that need only to be mixed with water, warmed, and served; snack foods; and a plethora of fast-food restaurants.

The number of different foods carried by a typical supermarket in the US ranges between 15,000 and 40,000, and the variety continues to grow. Presently about 1,000 new food products are introduced each month. The abundance of convenience food does not necessarily mean that it is easier to make healthful choices among these products. Convenience foods are often highly processed and so are not as nutrient-dense as whole, minimally processed foods. The increased consumption of convenience foods has raised concerns because of the increased consumption of food additives like fats and oils, salt, and sugar. For example, frozen pizza, chips, and snack foods often contain fat and oil, sugar, salt, and other additives not present in whole foods and recipes prepared at home.

The basis for increased consumption of convenience foods lies in the changing attitude toward meals and meal preparation. Marketing surveys reveal that shoppers desire convenience in preparing tasty meals and snacks. Increasingly, more people are eating meals away from home, and busy work schedules dictate shorter meal preparation times. These desires have spawned a huge variety of foods that require a minimum of preparation and/or eating time. The degree to which consumer demand for convenience food has been shaped by advertising is debatable by some and undebatable by others. Certainly children who watch television commercials have a different attitude toward meals than their grandparents. Home environments continue to change. An increasing numbers of households in which both parents work, and of single-parent families, reflect important trends affecting family meal choices and meal preparation.

- 26 Dr. Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, p. 261.

Adventists – the Christians whose most important belief is the imminent and literal Second Coming of Christ. Found in most periods of history and in most denominations, a separate movement began in the US with William Miller (1781–1849), who predicted Christ's return and the end of the world

in 1843–1844. Miller's followers eventually formed a denomination called Seventh-Day Adventists. They believe that the Second Coming of Christ is delayed only by a failure to keep the Sabbath (Friday evening to Saturday evening), which, along with Old Testament dietary laws, are rigorously held.



- 27 Dr. Gary Null, *Get Healthy Now!: A Complete Guide to Prevention, Treatment and Healthy Living, 2nd Edition*. (New York, New York: Seven Stories Press, 2000), p. 13.
- 28 **sulfa drugs (sulfonamides)** – drugs that are derived from sulfanilamide, a sulfur-containing chemical. They prevent the growth of bacteria and are thus used to treat bacterial and some fungal infections. The first sulfa drug was prontosil. It was discovered by the German physician and chemist Gerhard Domagk in 1935. They were the “wonder drugs” before penicillin and are still used today. Examples of sulfonamides include sulfamethoxazole/trimethoprim, sulfasalazine, and sulfisoxazole.
- Most sulfonamides are antibiotics that work by disrupting the production of dihydrofolic acid, a form of folic acid that bacteria and human cells use for producing proteins. Folic acid is required for the synthesis of precursors of DNA and RNA both in bacteria and in mammals. Mammals obtain their folic acid in their diet but bacteria need to synthesize it.
- Sulfonamides can exacerbate the blood-thinning effects of warfarin (Coumadin), possibly leading to abnormal bleeding. Other possible side effects include dizziness, headache, lethargy, diarrhea, anorexia, nausea, vomiting, and serious skin rashes. Sulfonamides should be stopped at the first appearance of a skin rash before the rash becomes severe (peeling, loosening, and blistering of the skin).
- 29 Dr. Gary Null, *The Complete Guide to Sensible Eating, Third Edition*. (New York, New York: Seven Stories Press, 1998), p. xviii.
- 30 Ibid.
- 31 Ibid., p. 105.
- 32 There are some hairsplitting details pertaining to animals that are pregnant: whether the embryo in its last days before birth is considered edible meat or not, and other similar technical issues. This *tafsīr* considers a broad view of the meanings of the Qur’an and was not conceived with a view to go into these kinds of details; for those who are interested in this area, the books of fiqh of the various Islamic schools of thought are replete with information about myriad cases and circumstances.

33 In line with the previous note, there are similarly finespun details about where exactly the knife should be on the neck of the animal during the *dhabḥ*, how far the knife should go, and whether removing the knife during the *dhabḥ* and then placing it back to complete the procedure is permissible. Going into an explanation of the various positions in this regard is not consistent with the approach taken by this *tafsīr*.

34 Narrated by Shaddād ibn Aws, and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Muslim, al-Nisā'ī, Abū Dāwūd, and Ibn Mājah.

إِنَّ اللَّهَ كَتَبَ الْإِحْسَانَ عَلَىٰ كُلِّ شَيْءٍ فَإِذَا قَتَلْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا الْقِتْلَةَ وَإِذَا ذَبَحْتُمْ فَأَحْسِنُوا الذَّبْحَةَ وَلْيُحَدِّثْكُمْ شُفْرَتَهُ وَلْيُرِحْ ذَبِيحَتَهُ.

35 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 6, p. 82 (originally recorded in the *tafsīr* of Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī).

36 *Hadīth al-Istikhārah* as narrated by Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh and recorded by almost all the books of hadīth.

إِذَا هَمَّ أَحَدُكُمْ بِالْأَمْرِ فَلْيَرْكَعْ رَكَعَتَيْنِ مِنْ غَيْرِ الْفَرِيضَةِ. ثُمَّ لِيُقَلِّ: اللَّهُمَّ إِنِّي أَسْتَخِيرُكَ بِعِلْمِكَ. وَأَسْتَقْدِرُكَ بِقُدْرَتِكَ. وَأَسْأَلُكَ مِنْ فَضْلِكَ. فَإِنَّكَ تَقْدِرُ وَلَا أَقْدِرُ. وَتَعْلَمُ وَلَا أَعْلَمُ. وَأَنْتَ عَلَّامُ الْغُيُوبِ. اللَّهُمَّ إِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ هَذَا الْأَمْرَ (ثُمَّ تَسَمِّيهِ بِعَيْنِهِ) خَيْرًا لِي فِي عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَأَجَلِهِ (أَوْ قَالَ: فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي) فَاقْدُرْهُ لِي وَيَسِّرْهُ لِي. ثُمَّ بَارِكْ لِي فِيهِ. اللَّهُمَّ وَإِنْ كُنْتَ تَعْلَمُ أَنَّهُ شَرٌّ لِي فِي دِينِي وَمَعَاشِي وَعَاقِبَةِ أَمْرِي (أَوْ قَالَ: فِي عَاجِلِ أَمْرِي وَأَجَلِهِ) فَاصْرِفْهُ عَنِّي. وَاقْدُرْ لِي الْخَيْرَ حَيْثُ كَانَ ثُمَّ رَضِّنِي بِهِ.

37 **tarot** – a pack of cards used chiefly in fortune-telling. It consists of 22 picture cards of the major arcana (secrets) and 56 cards in four suits of the minor arcana: staves (or wands), cups, swords, and coins. The oldest cards date from 15th-century Italy. There are many theories about their origin and symbolism. Their design was influenced by occult features, introduced in the late-19th century. However, some designs relate to ancient religions, such as the Hindu deities, the sacred *Book of Days* used by Aztec priests, and the *Book of Thoth*, the Egyptian god of wisdom and the occult.



38 **zodiac** – zone of the heavens containing the paths of the Sun, Moon, and planets. When this was devised by the ancient Greeks, only five planets were known, making the zodiac about 16 degrees wide. The stars in it are

grouped into 12 signs (constellations), each 30 degrees in extent: Aries, Taurus, Gemini, Cancer, Leo, Virgo, Libra, Scorpius, Sagittarius, Capricornus, Aquarius, and Pisces. Because of the precision of the equinoxes, the current constellations do not cover the same areas of sky as the zodiacal signs of the same name. Essentially, the zodiac is an ecliptic coordinate system that takes the ecliptic as the origin of latitude, and the position of the Sun at vernal equinox as the origin of longitude. The ecliptic represents the apparent path of the Sun across the celestial sphere — an imaginary sphere of arbitrarily large radius, concentric with the Earth — over the course of the year.



- 39 The general idea was mentioned in the *tafsīr* of Ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī (and retold in *Tafsīr al-Manār*),^a but it has been imported into the context of the modern world herein so that it is not forgotten altogether.

a Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Volume 6, p. 155.

- 40 Narrated by ‘Alī ibn Abī Ṭālib and recorded by al-Tirmidhī; other versions of this hadith were recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal and al-Bayhaqī.

... إِنَّهَا سَتَكُونُ فِتْنَةً، فَلَيْتَ مَا أَخْرَجَ مِنْهَا يَا رَسُولَ اللَّهِ؟ قَالَ: كِتَابُ اللَّهِ فِيهِ نَبَأٌ مَا قَبْلَكُمْ . وَخَيْرٌ مَا بَعْدَكُمْ، وَحُكْمٌ مَا بَيْنَكُمْ. وَهُوَ الْفَضْلُ لَيْسَ بِالْهَزْلِ. مَنْ تَرَكَهُ مِنْ جَبَّارٍ قَصَمَهُ اللَّهُ. وَمَنْ ابْتَغَى الْهُدَى فِي غَيْرِهِ أَضَلَّهُ اللَّهُ. وَهُوَ حَبْلُ اللَّهِ الْمَتِينُ.

- 41 Narrated by Ibn Mas‘ūd and recorded by al-Ḥākim and al-Bayhaqī. The same hadith was narrated by Ibn Abī Shībah, Muḥammad ibn Naṣr, and Ibn al-Anbārī, and is to be found in the books of *tafsīr*.

إن هذا القرآن حبل الله وهو النور المبين والشفاء النافع عصمة لمن تمسك به ونجاة لمن تبعه لا يعوج فيقوم ولا يزيغ فيستعجب ولا تنقض عجايبه ولا يخلق على كثرة الرد.

The Arabic word *ḥabl*, which is used in this hadith, is often translated as the English word *rope*; however, in English, most usages of this word imply some kind of confinement. Less often, it is used to imply *making a connection*, and it is this meaning that comes close to the Arabic word *ḥabl*, as it occurs in this context. Hence, in this particular hadith, *ḥabl* has been translated as *means to connect with Allah* (ﷻ).

- 42 **General Motors (GM)** – an American multinational corporation headquartered in Detroit, Michigan, USA. Founded in 1908 as a holding company

for McLaughlin Car Company of Canada Limited and Buick, General Motors now designs, manufactures, markets, and distributes vehicles and vehicle parts, and sells financial services. Employing over 212,000 people, it produces automobiles in 37 countries and does business in 120; it was the global automobile sales leader for 77 years from 1931 to 2007.



As large and influential as the corporation once was — in its heyday, it was the largest in the world, and among the most profitable — it had to go through government-backed Chapter 11 bankruptcy proceedings (reorganization under new management) in 2009. GM is one of those US corporations, not unlike the major banks, that is “too big to fail,” as it has the leverage in the US Congress and other places to offset bad and controversial decisions by forcing the taxpayers to pay for the losses.

43 This could be understood in light of the general *fiqhī* rule, “Necessities override prohibitions.”

44 Narrated by ‘Adī ibn Ḥātim and recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

إِذَا أُرْسِلَتْ كِلَابُكَ الْمُتَعَلِّمَةَ، وَذَكَرْتَ اسْمَ اللَّهِ، فَكُلْ مَا أُمْسَكُنْ عَلَيْكَ، إِلَّا أَنْ يَأْكُلَ الْكَلْبُ فَلَا تَأْكُلْ. فَإِنِّي أَخَافُ أَنْ يَكُونَ إِذَا أُمْسَكَ عَلَى تَفْسِيهِ.

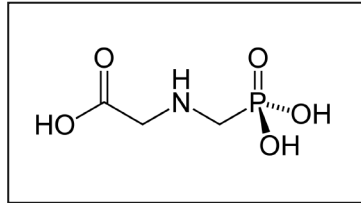
45 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Abbās and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Muslim, and others.

أَنَّ رَسُولَ اللَّهِ صَلَّى اللَّهُ عَلَيْهِ وَسَلَّمَ نَهَى عَنْ كُلِّ ذِي نَابٍ مِنَ السَّبَاعِ، وَعَنْ كُلِّ ذِي مَخْلَبٍ مِنَ الطَّيْرِ.

46 **US Federal Insecticide, Fungicide and Rodenticide Act (FIFRA)** – according to the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), “The objective of FIFRA is to provide federal control of pesticide distribution, sale, and use. All pesticides used in the United States must be registered (licensed) by the EPA. Registration assures that pesticides will be properly labeled and that, if used in accordance with specifications, they will not cause unreasonable harm to the environment.” In the US, the first pesticide control law, enacted in 1910, was primarily aimed at protecting consumers from ineffective products and deceptive labeling. When FIFRA was first passed in 1947, it established procedures for registering pesticides with the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) along with labeling provisions. The law was still, however, primarily concerned with the efficacy of pesticides and did not regulate pesticide use. FIFRA was rewritten in 1972 when it was amended by the Federal Environmental Pesticide Control Act

(FEPCA). The law has been amended numerous times since 1972, including some significant amendments in the form of the Food Quality Protection Act (FQPA) of 1996. In its current form, FIFRA mandates that EPA regulate the use and sale of pesticides to protect human health and preserve the environment. Even though FIFRA provides the EPA with the authority to oversee the sale and use of pesticides, it does not fully preempt state/tribal or local law, and hence each state/tribe and local government may also regulate pesticide use.

- 47 **glyphosate (N-(phosphonomethyl)glycine)** – a broad-spectrum herbicide used to kill weeds and grasses known to compete with commercial crops, especially cash crops like corn, wheat, and soy. Brought to market in the 1970s by Monsanto Company under the trade name



Roundup, and due to the corporation's selective marketing of its "benefits (profits)" to mostly economically deprived farmers, glyphosate's use by farmers was almost inevitable, especially in view of the fact that Monsanto scientists followed up the introduction of the herbicide with "Roundup Ready crops," that is, genetically modified glyphosate-resistant crops that enabled farmers to kill weeds (by spraying Roundup) without killing their crops. Roundup Ready soybean was the first Roundup Ready crop.

Glyphosate works by inhibiting a plant growth enzyme involved in the synthesis of the aromatic amino acids: tyrosine, tryptophan, and phenylalanine. Absorbed through foliage, it is only considered to be effective on actively growing plants. Some crops have been genetically engineered to be resistant to glyphosate (i.e., Roundup Ready, also created by Monsanto Company). Such crops allow farmers to use glyphosate as a postemergence herbicide against both broadleaf and cereal weeds, but the development of similar resistance in some weed species is emerging as a costly problem.

By 2007, glyphosate had become the most heavily employed herbicide in the US with 180–185 million pounds applied in the agricultural sector alone, not to mention in-home and private use.

With its heavy use in agriculture, weed resistance to glyphosate is a growing problem, as it has led to the emergence of so-called super-weeds that cannot be killed with current herbicides. Such weeds are said to "take over" fields such that nothing useful can be grown on them from that point on. Roundup Ready crops are now also known to be afflicted with a type of "plant AIDS" that routinely destroys one-third of the Roundup Ready crop. While glyphosate and formulations such as Roundup have been approved by regulatory bodies worldwide and are widely used, concerns about their effects on humans and the environment persist. One such concern is about

the diminished nutritive value of genetically engineered crops as opposed to unmodified ones. Consider the results of a study published in the *Food Chemistry* journal (2014),

The organic soybeans [unmodified soy cultivated using an organic cultivation regime] differed in nutrient composition compared to the conventional [unmodified soy cultivated using a conventional “chemical” cultivation regime] and GM soybeans [genetically modified, glyphosate-tolerant soy (GM-soy)] in several variables (Table 2). The organic samples contained significantly more total protein compared to both the GM-soy and conventional soy... which was also reflected with a higher content of the indispensable amino acids (IAAs). There was significantly lower content of 18:2n-6, and sum saturated fats in the organic soybean material... The content of Zn [zinc] was significantly higher in the organic samples compared to the conventional and GM samples.

...The GM-soy (pooled samples) contained on average less of all the main sugars (glucose, fructose, sucrose and maltose) compared to both the conventional and organic soy... The organic soy contained more sugars than both conventional and GM-soy, but less fibre.

...In this study it was found that Roundup Ready GM-soybeans sprayed during the growing season had taken up and accumulated glyphosate and AMPA [a herbicide breakdown residual] at concentration levels of 0.4–8.8 and 0.7–10mg/kg, respectively. In contrast, conventional and organic soybeans did not contain these chemicals.

...Soybean nutritional quality is determined by many factors but the protein level, the mineral content and fatty acid (FA) composition are essential components. Our results clearly show that different agricultural practices affect the quality of soybeans. The organic soybeans had significantly higher levels of total protein and lower levels of linoleic acid LA (18:2n-6) and palmitic acid PA (16:0). Soybeans are a major dietary source of LA and although LA is an essential FA, a high and unbalanced intake (high omega 6 and low omega 3) is emerging as a risk factor for developing obesity. We also show that GM-soy had a significantly higher level of PA, a saturated FA, compared to organic soybeans.

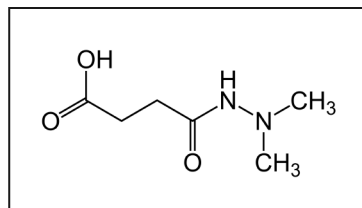
...Glyphosate has been shown to reduce photosynthesis and nutrient uptake in GM-soy, in greenhouse and field trials, both for first and second generation of glyphosate resistant soy plants. High glyphosate application rates have been shown to reduce alfa-linolenic acid (ALA, 18:3n-3) but increase oleic acid (OL, 18:1n-9), i.e., producing a less healthy profile of fatty acids.

...In general, a healthy microbial community, “the plant microbiome,” in the soil of the rhizosphere is an important contributing factor for plant trait characteristics and plant health. Glyphosate has the potential to adversely affect microbial communities present in soils into which plants are rooted, i.e., increased colonisation by *Fusarium*.

...Comparisons between organic and conventional agriculture have not reached consistent conclusions on nutritional quality, but a review of 223 compositional studies of nutrients and contaminants found that organic foods have significantly lower levels of pesticide residues. A recent feeding study that compared organic and conventional food products concluded that organic foods may be more nutritionally balanced than conventional foods, or that they contain higher levels of nutrients, since the fruit fly *Drosophila melanogaster* lived longer and produced more offspring when fed organic soybeans (or potatoes, raisins, bananas) compared to conventional produce. Organic crops may be more variable than industrially produced plant products, but are in general richer in some nutritionally important elements, in antioxidant phytochemicals and lower in pesticide residues. Our data support these conclusions.^a

- a T. Bohn, M. Cuhraa, T. Traavik, M. Sanden, J. Fagan, R. Primicerio, ‘Compositional differences in soybeans on the market: Glyphosate accumulates in Roundup Ready GM soybeans’, *Food Chemistry* 153 (June 15, 2014), pp. 207–15. <http://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0308814613019201>

daminozide – also known as Alar, Kylar, B-NINE, DMASA, SADH, or B 995, it is a chemical sprayed on fruit to regulate their growth, to make their harvesting easier, and to keep apples from falling off trees before they are ripe. Alar, which was manufactured in the US by the



Uniroyal Chemical Company, was first approved for use in the US in 1963. It was primarily used on apples and was also registered for use on cherries, peaches, pears, Concord grapes, tomato transplants, and peanut vines. In 1989 it was voluntarily withdrawn by the manufacturer after the US Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) proposed banning it based on concerns about cancer risks to consumers. Daminozide remains classified as a probable human carcinogen by the EPA and is listed as a known carcinogen under California’s Proposition 65. According to Wendy Gordon, who was working

at the Natural Resources Defense Council (NRDC) at the time of the “Alar Scare” in 1989 and founded Mothers & Others for a Livable Planet, the allegations against the use of the chemical were substantial,

[The corporate] rendition of the Alar story has been told and retold so many times since 1989 that it’s accepted truth. According to this version, Alar was in fact a safe chemical that was absolutely essential for the health of the nation’s apple industry, and that it was forced from the market by environmental and consumer extremists at a cost to the industry of at least \$100 million.

Actually, the truth is that Alar was — and is — not a safe chemical. And it was not necessary for the health of the nation’s apple industry. The US courts settled this contentious debate once and for all in 1992–93 when judges dismissed the apple growers’ lawsuit against NRDC and CBS, two organizations involved in the uncovering of the true story of Alar. The truth is that apple production has grown in the decades since Alar was forced [removed] from the market.

So why does common wisdom suggest otherwise? And what lessons can we draw from a decades-old case about what is happening with other environmental issues today?

The distortion of the Alar story is in fact the machinations of a sophisticated public relations counterattack on the part of industry front groups and conservative media, which successfully turned reality upside down, much like they are doing today with the science of climate change and the need for environmental regulation.

The barrage of attacks on the EPA and the Clean Air Act going on right now in Congress, aided and abetted by right-wing front groups, reminds me of the attacks on NRDC following the release of its report “Intolerable Risk” which exposed the failure of a regulatory system to take into account the unique vulnerabilities and dietary patterns of young children when establishing standards for safe levels of pesticides in food. NRDC was slammed as a radical organization and the scientific underpinnings of its research attacked as illegitimate.

Nothing could be farther from the truth though this is the story that won the day. How would I know? I was working at NRDC at the time. In fact, I shared a small office with Robin Whyatt, PhD, a principal researcher and co-author of the report, and after its release I partnered with Meryl Streep and many other concerned parents to form Mothers & Others. Consumers have a right to know, we argued, what’s in the food they feed their families, to vote with their dollars for a safe and sustainable food system and to

demand that our government puts public health, particularly our children's, above corporate interests.

Lets look at some of the accepted "facts" of the Alar case.

The first error is that NRDC's report focused on Alar. In fact, "Intolerable Risk" analyzed the hazards of 23 agrichemicals found in common fruits and vegetables consumed by American children during the first 6 years of life, and considered the cancer hazard, toxicity to the central nervous system, and inadequacies in the pesticide regulatory system designed to protect public health. Alar became the "poster child" for the research, and the media clamor to follow, as it was the one *60 Minutes* zoomed in on with their segment, "A is for Apple."

There were very good reasons to make an example of Alar, as this 4-part review of its history will tell. It was not the safe chemical the media has mythologized. In fact, its hazards became evident in the 1970s soon after hitting the market. And the true story of Alar, which saw the light of day for a brief moment in the spring of 1989, turned a white-hot spotlight on the challenges the EPA faced then and still today getting a problem chemical removed from the market. This may be why the industry fought back with such vengeance, and worked especially hard turning the media story around. The regulatory system was tipped in industry's favor; to cede ground to the EPA and consumers on Alar could have opened a floodgate of reforms.

So what then is the true story of Alar?

Let's start in 1968, when Alar entered the market. The Uniroyal Corporation had received a government license to sell it for use on apples and peanuts. Alar by the way is not a pesticide as many mistakenly call it. It's a growth regulator, the "stop-drop" wonder chemical. It doesn't kill pests but prevents fruit from dropping to the ground too early. As a consequence, Alar provided economic benefits to apple growers, who could harvest their crop over a longer period, easing labor issues. The benefit to consumers was a cosmetically enhanced apple that stayed a bit crunchier a bit longer.

The germ of Alar's undoing is in its chemical makeup. Alar is manufactured by mixing succinic anhydride with 1,1-dimethylhydrazine (UDMH), a toxic component of rocket fuel. UDMH has always been a contaminant present in Alar. In addition, Alar degrades into UDMH when it is heated — as in cooking applesauce, or sterilizing apple juice for bottling — or when Alar is digested in the human stomach. In tests of carcinogenicity (cancer-causing power), UDMH proves to be about 1,000 times as powerful as Alar itself.

But it is safe to say that the health effects of Alar had hardly been evaluated before it was licensed for use in 1968. Back in those days, the US Department of Agriculture had legal responsibility for the health and safety aspects of all crop chemicals. Between 1945 and 1966, USDA licensed nearly 60,000 individual pesticides at a time when the agency had only one toxicologist on staff; it was his job to keep abreast of the health and safety literature (if any existed) for each of the 60,000 products. In 1972, this responsibility was passed to the EPA.

Concerns about the health impacts of Alar began in 1973, when a study published in the *Journal of the National Cancer Institute* showed that mice given UDMH at high levels in their drinking water developed cancer of the lung, kidney, liver, lymph system, and blood vessels. A follow-up study of mice published in 1977 confirmed the finding of cancer in the lungs, kidneys, and blood vessels of treated mice. The same year, researchers also published a study of Alar's effect on Golden hamsters, which found rare blood vessel tumors and tumors of the intestines in both sexes. There was also evidence of cancer in a third species, rats, exposed to Alar in a study conducted by the National Cancer Institute in 1978.

Though its manufacturer played down Alar's risks (Uniroyal claimed to have studies of workers that proved Alar/UDMH was safe, though never released the data), by the early 1980s, prominent health research institutions — the International Agency for Research on Cancer, the Carcinogen Assessment Group within the US EPA and the US National Toxicology Program — had reached agreement that Alar/UDMH causes cancer in laboratory animals and is a "probable human carcinogen."

At the time of these studies, a provision of the Food, Drug, and Cosmetic Act (the so-called Delaney Clause) required EPA to ban pesticides known to cause cancer in animals or humans if those pesticides concentrated in processed food, such as applesauce and apple juice. Though the 1977 study put Alar/UDMH squarely into its crosshairs, the EPA took no action against Alar for years.

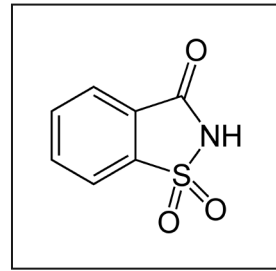
That changed in 1984, when on September 19, the EPA announced that it was investigating the lifetime cancer risks among people eating apples and peanuts sprayed with Alar. A year later, in August 1985, EPA announced that it was planning to initiate a process that would result in banning Alar.

Its reasons: Alar was being used on 38 percent of the US apple crop; it penetrated to the interior of the apple so washing wouldn't remove it; and it might be causing as many as 100 cancers per million people exposed to it in their diet for a lifetime. The official

threshold for concern within EPA at that time was one cancer in a million exposed people, so Alar was thought to create a human health hazard at least 100 times as great as the agency considered acceptable. So in the Fall of 1985, EPA submitted its Alar ban plan to the Agency's Scientific Advisory Board (SAB).^a

- a Wendy Gordon, *The True Alar Story*. (New York, New York: onearth website, a publication of NRDC, March 22, 2011). <http://archive.onearth.org/blog/the-true-alar-story>

saccharin – an artificial sweetener with effectively no food energy, which is about 300–400 times sweeter than sucrose (table sugar), but leaves a bitter or metallic aftertaste. Today saccharin is used in a wide range of low- and no-calorie and sugar-free foods and beverages, including tabletop sweeteners, baked goods, jams, chewing gum, canned fruit, candy, dessert toppings, and salad dressings as well as cosmetic products, vitamins, and pharmaceuticals. Some brand names associated with the sweetener include Sweet n' Low, Sugar Twin, and Necta Sweet. The human body does not metabolize saccharin, meaning it has no caloric or nutritional value, unlike sugar; it passes through the body unchanged.



Despite the fact that the sweetener was widely believed in the 1970s to cause cancer, the United States National Toxicology Program determined that the conclusions of those studies were faulty, and so the EPA officially removed saccharin and its salts from its list of hazardous constituents and commercial chemical products. In 2010, the EPA stated that saccharin was no longer considered a potential hazard to human health. Despite the EPA's position, cancer studies done in the last two decades suggest that heavy use of artificial sweeteners is associated with increased risk of bladder cancer. Some of the more common side effects related to saccharin consumption on a regular basis include diarrhea, skin issues, and headaches in some individuals. Saccharin stimulation has also been shown to significantly increase plasma insulin concentration.

bovine growth hormone or bovine somatotropin (BGH or BST) – a naturally occurring hormone produced in a cow's pituitary gland and used physiologically to regulate various metabolic processes, among them lactation. The hormone can now be bioengineered synthetically (that is, it no longer has to be harvested from dead cows) through recombinant DNA technology to create rBGH or rBST, also known as artificial growth hormone. Monsanto Company was the first US pharmaceutical corporation to receive

approval from the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) to develop a commercial rBGH product (known as Posilac).

In 1937, the administration of BST (before it was bioengineered) was shown to increase the milk yield in lactating cows by preventing mammary cell death in dairy cattle. An average dairy cow begins its lactation cycle with a moderate daily level of milk production. This production gradually rises until it peaks, about 70 days from the beginning of the cycle. From that point until the cow stops lactating, production slowly decreases. The increase and decrease in milk production during the cycle is caused in part by the number of mammary cells in the udder. The highest number of mammary cells is associated with the highest amount of milk production. As these cells begin to die near the end of the cycle, milk production decreases until the next lactation cycle. Administration of rBST (or naturally occurring BST) prior to peak production, in cows that are well fed, slows the rate at which the number of mammary cells decreases, and increases the amount of nutrients directed away from fat and toward the mammary cells, leading to an extension of peak milk production.

The FDA and the National Institutes of Health in the US, along with the World Health Organization (WHO) have all concluded that dairy and meat from rBGH-treated cows are safe for human consumption. Some countries including Brazil, Mexico, Russia, and India have followed suit and allowed their cows to be injected with rBGH. However, other countries such as Canada, New Zealand, Australia, Japan, and the European Union have banned the commercial use of rBGH.

Bovine health studies have shown that rBGH-treated cows are substantially more likely to suffer from clinical mastitis, foot problems, a reduction in fertility, an increase in the likelihood of lameness, and injection site reactions. Insofar as human health is concerned, since its commercial approval, rBGH has proven controversial because of its potentially carcinogenic effects. Drinking any type of cow's milk noticeably raises body levels of insulin-like growth factor 1 (IGF-1), a hormone that occurs naturally in both cows and humans. Injecting cows with rBST leads to an increase in IGF-1 levels in milk. Elevated levels of IGF-1, in particular, have been associated with increased risk of breast cancer in women. Because of increasing public reaction against the use of rBGH, retailers who sell or use milk in their products — such as Kroger, Whole Foods, Walmart, Starbucks, Dannon, and Yoplait in addition to 50 of the top 100 dairies in the US — have decided to go rBGH-free.

48 Dr. Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, p. 383.

49 **campylobacteriosis** – a type of food poisoning caused by the bacterium *Campylobacter pylori*. A leading cause of food poisoning in the United

States, the bacterium is to be found in livestock and contaminated milk, raw meat, and poultry. In 1987 the National Academy of Sciences concluded that half of the cases of *campylobacter* infections were attributable to contaminated chicken.

Campylobacteriosis has become an important cause of diarrhea from food during the last 20 years. Diarrhea is potentially a serious condition because it can prevent nutrient uptake and cause dehydration, leading to electrolyte imbalance. Other symptoms include fever, stomach cramps, and sometimes bloody stools. Symptoms appear two to five days after eating contaminated food and can last a week. To avoid contamination during meal preparation, the utensils and cutting board used to prepare raw meat should not come in contact with vegetables or cooked meat. In the increasingly chemical world that people have been socialized to live in, consumption of untreated water and unpasteurized milk (bought from unregulated sources) is not advised because of the increased risk of bacterial contamination from these sources.

- 50 The prevention of botulism is mainly related to taking precautionary, common-sense measures with regard to food safety. When in doubt about the safety of a food, it should be discarded. Commercially canned goods that are swollen and home-canned products that have bubbles, discolorations, or are cloudy should also be discarded. These are signs of improper or unsanitary canning. Cooked foods should be refrigerated, especially those in a tight wrapping (such as a baked potato in foil or food coated with fat or batter, like sauteed onions). Food should be reheated thoroughly; 10 minutes of high heat destroys *botulinum* toxin. Refer also to Endnote 104 in Volume 2.
- 51 **Salmonella** – refer to Endnote 104 in Volume 2.
- 52 Dr. Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, p. 387.
- 53 Ibid.
- 54 Dr. Gary Null, *Reverse Arthritis and Pain Naturally: A Proven Approach to an Anti-Inflammatory, Pain-Free Life*. (North Palm Beach, Florida, USA: Essential Publishing, Inc., 2013), pp. 61–72.
- 55 Dr. Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, pp. 306–07.
- 56 Eric Schlosser, *Fast Food Nation: the Dark Side of the All-American Diet*. (New York, New York: Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Publishing Company, 2012), pp. 149–204.

- 57 Secular scientific sources suggest that safe procedures for handling food should include the following:
1. wash hands with soap before preparing food and use a fresh dish towel — many food-borne illnesses occur due to fecal contamination;
 2. assume that all raw meat, fish, and poultry are contaminated, hence do not mix raw meat (especially hamburger, pork, and roast beef) with fresh vegetables; do not use the same cutting board, sponges, or utensils for raw meat and fresh vegetables; do not use the same utensils or even the same kitchen sponge for both raw and cooked meat as this can reintroduce bacteria into the cooked meat;
 3. cook food thoroughly — meat should not be pink and juice should run gray; freeze or refrigerate leftovers, particularly any food that is wrapped or coated with breading (refrigerator temperature should be kept below 40°F; do not leave food at room temperature for more than one hour;
 4. thaw meat or poultry in the refrigerator, microwave, or in cold running water rather than at room temperature;
 5. do not stuff a turkey ahead of roasting time and then refrigerate it as this could allow time for disease-producing bacteria to multiply; stuff the bird and cook it immediately; and
 6. marinate meat, poultry, and seafood in the refrigerator rather than at room temperature.

- 58 **Radura** – international symbol, usually green and resembling a plant in a circle, indicating a food product, or a part thereof, has been irradiated. In the United States since 1986, the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has stipulated that irradiated foods include labeling with either the statement “treated with radiation” or “treated by irradiation,” along with the Radura. These labeling requirements apply only to foods sold in stores, but not to food sold by restaurants, fast-food franchises, or hotels, whose owners and managers are not required to inform their diners if any of the food items have been irradiated. In the European Union, though the use of the Radura is not required, all irradiated food sold in stores and restaurants, down to the last ingredient, has to be labeled with the proper phrasing in the native language of the member country.



- 59 Dr. Robert A. Ronzio, *The Encyclopedia of Nutrition and Good Health*, p. 198–99.

- 60 Ibid.

- 61 Ibid.
- 62 Narrated by Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh and recorded by Abū Dāwūd al-Ṭayālīsī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Bayhaqī.
 ومفتاح الجنّة الصلاة ومفتاح الصلاة الطهور.
- 63 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 6, p. 102–03 (originally narrated by Anas ibn Mālik).
- 64 Narrated by 'Amr ibn 'Āmir al-Anṣārī and recorded by al-Bukhārī and other collectors of hadith.
- 65 In the literalist Zāhirī school of thought (*madhhab*), a Muslim must perform *wuḍū'* every time he or she does a *ṣalāh*.
- 66 According to Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Ishāq, Abū 'Ubayd, Abū Thawr, Ibn al-Mundhir, and some *faqīhs* of Ahl al-Bayt.
- 67 According to al-Thawrī, al-Awzā'ī, al-Layth, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Zayd ibn 'Alī; and al-Nāṣir, al-Bāqir, and al-Ṣādiq from Ahl al-Bayt. Others, though, say that the entire scalp area of the head has to be wiped.
- 68 Narrated by Abū Sa'īd al-Khudrī and recorded by Muslim.
 إنما الماء من الماء .
- 69 Some *fiqhī* opinions extend the wiping of hands all the way to the elbows as is the case in the *wuḍū'* done with water. Their reference is the hadith, “*Tayammum is two strikes: one for the face and the other for the hands to the elbows.*”^a
- a Narrated by Ibn 'Umar and recorded by al-Dārquṭnī.
 التيمّم ضربتان ضربة للوجه وضربة لليدين إلى المرفقين.
- 70 According to the *madhhab* of Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, as well as to the opinions of Ishāq and many scholars of hadith.
- 71 Narrated by Umm al-Mu'minīn 'Ā'ishah and Zayd ibn Thābit, and recorded by Muslim, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and al-Nisā'ī.
 توضأوا بما مسّت النّار.
- 72 From hadiths recorded in al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

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- 73 Siegfried Gursche, Zoltan Rona, *Encyclopedia of Natural Healing: A Practical Self-Help Guide, Second Edition*. (Burnaby, British Columbia, Canada: Alive Publishing Group Inc., 1997), pp. 102–03.
- 74 Ibid.
- 75 Ibid.
- 76 Ibid.
- 77 Ibid.
- 78 Ibid.
- 79 Ibid.
- 80 Jacqueline Krohn, Frances Taylor, *Natural Detoxification: A Practical Encyclopedia*. (Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada: Hartley & Marks Publishers Inc., 2000), p. 420.
- 81 Ibid.
- 82 Ibid., p. 421.
- 83 Ibid., p. 422.
- 84 Ibid., pp. 261–67.
- 85 Ibid.
- 86 Ibid.
- 87 Ibid.
- 88 Ibid.
- 89 Ibid.
- 90 Ibid.

Many hydrotherapy techniques can be safely done at home, keeping in mind a few precautions. The very young and the aged have poor heat regulation,

and hence cannot tolerate severe temperature extremes. Prolonged illness, fatigue, or anemia also reduce a person's tolerance to temperature extremes. Pressure, friction, hot drinks, and exercise can enhance reactions, and the prolonged application of heat or cold can cause tissue damage and inhibit the natural and efficacious effects of the therapy.

91 Jacqueline Krohn, Frances Taylor, *Natural Detoxification*, pp. 261–67.

92 Ibid.

93 **fluorosis** – a disease resulting from excessive fluoride consumption, which can lead to the mottling of tooth enamel during tooth development. The ingestion of fluoride at levels 100 times the optimal level may lead to fluoride toxicity, characterized by bone overgrowth, brittle bones, and stiff joints. Excessive fluoride in drinking water can cause fluorosis. However, fluorosis does not occur in communities where fluoride is added to drinking water because the level is regulated to only 1mg/L.

94 Jacqueline Krohn, Frances Taylor, *Natural Detoxification*, pp. 143–48.

95 Ibid.

96 Ibid.

97 Ibid.

98 Ibid.

99 Ibid.

A study done by the EPA in 50 American states between 1988 and 1990 found that 10% of community wells and 4% of rural wells contained at least one pesticide above the minimum limits allowed by the EPA. Between 1–2% of the wells tested were contaminated with nitrates (from fertilizer runoff), which can cause methemoglobinemia, a change in red blood cells that prevents them from carrying oxygen. Babies are more sensitive to the effects of methemoglobinemia than adults. Nitrates are also precursors to nitrosoamines, which are known carcinogens.

100 Jacqueline Krohn, Frances Taylor, *Natural Detoxification*, pp. 143–48.

101 Ibid.

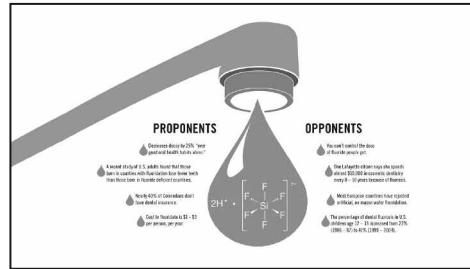
102 Ibid.

103 Ibid.

Wilson's Disease – a rare hereditary condition in which copper accumulates in the brain and liver, gradually leading to tremors, muscular rigidity, kidney malfunction, and cognitive disturbances.

104 Jacqueline Krohn, Frances Taylor, *Natural Detoxification*, pp. 143–48.

fluoride – added to drinking water in some areas to prevent tooth decay. In other areas, fluoride from dissolved salts in mineral formations occurs naturally in water. There is controversy over the toxicity of fluoride and whether it can cause other diseases. Oppo-



nents to fluoridation say that long-term exposure to fluorine in drinking water can weaken the immune system and can cause birth defects, genetic damage, cancer, and heart disease. Fluorine added to drinking water has also been shown to diminish thyroid function because fluorine, being a more reactive cousin of iodine, competes with iodine for the same receptor sites, hence affecting the production of essential hormones. At levels higher than 3 parts per million (ppm), fluoride can cause teeth to turn yellow, brown, or black and the tips to break off. Many water supplies exceed the EPA's fluoride drinking water standard of 0.7–1.2ppm, and the EPA is considering raising the current standard.

105 Mark Schleifstein, *BP Deepwater Horizon spill: Scientists say seafood safe, but health effects being measured*. (New Orleans, Louisiana, USA: The Times-Picayune website, January 22, 2013).
http://www.nola.com/news/gulf-oil-spill/index.ssf/2013/01/bp_deepwater_horizon_spill_sci.html

106 Remy Melina, *Why Is Offshore Drilling So Dangerous?* (New York, New York, USA: livescience website, May 28, 2010).
<http://www.livescience.com/32614-why-is-offshore-drilling-so-dangerous-.html>

107 Dr. Richard Wilcox, *How Badly Is Fukushima Radiation Damaging the Pacific Ocean?* (Activist Post website: August 30, 2014).

<http://www.activistpost.com/2014/08/how-badly-is-fukushima-radiation.html>

108 Nafeez Mossadeq Ahmed, *Western wars have killed four million Muslims since 1990*. (Voltairenet.org website, April 11, 2015).
<http://www.voltairenet.org/article187299.html>

109 Mathaba, *Libya's "Water Wars" and Gaddafi's Great Man-Made River Project*. (GlobalResearch website, May 13, 2013).
<http://www.globalresearch.ca/libyas-water-wars-and-gaddafis-great-man-made-river-project/5334868>

110 Palestine Monitor staff writers, *Water in Palestine*. (Vancouver, Washington, USA: IfAmericansKnew.org website).
http://www.ifamericansknew.org/cur_sit/water.html

111 Narrated by Abū Mālīk al-Ash'arī and recorded by Muslim, al-Tirmidhī, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal.

الطَّهْرُ شَطْرُ الْإِيمَانِ.

112 As recorded by Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī and others.

113 According to Mālīk, al-Shāfi'ī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, and al-Nisā'ī.

114 As a matter of knowledge, there are some essential bacteria and microbial organisms that live and proliferate in human intestines, so as to allow the body's immune system to function at peak efficiency. If man was to obliterate all microbes, single-celled, or noncellular spherical, spiral, or rod-shaped organisms in the world, he would probably interfere with the nature of his biological being.

115 See *Sūrah al-Mumtaḥanaḥ* (60:1–13).

116 **Bi'r Ma'ūnaḥ** – literally, the well of Ma'ūnaḥ. A celebrated spot, four marches from Makkah, where a party of Prophet Muhammad's (ﷺ) companions were slain by Banū 'Āmir and Banū Salīm.

117 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Volume 6, p. 277.

118 Muḥammad Abū Zuhraḥ, *Khātam al-Nabiyīn*, Volume 2, p. 748.

119 Ibid.

The author recommends consulting Ibn Ishāq's account of this incident.

120 Dan Smith, Ane Bræin, *The Penguin State of the World Atlas*. (New York, New York: Penguin Books, 2003).

121 **Wall Street** – street on Manhattan Island in New York City, where the New York Stock Exchange and other major financial institutions are located. The road follows what once was the walled north boundary of the original Dutch colony. See also pp. 73 and 327 in Volume 2; p. 354 in Volume 3; **Endnote 156** in Volume 4; and Endnote 389 in Volume 5.

122 It appears the most reliable of the narratives about this incident is the one verified by al-Ḥākim on the authority of Jābir ibn 'Abdillāh.

123 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Volume 6, p. 276.

124 Ibid., pp. 276–77.

125 In Arabic, this is Ya'qūb (Isrā'il – ۞).

126 **Pharaoh** – permanent title of the king of Egypt in ancient times. The word is said to mean the *Great House*, and was originally applied to the royal palace. Reference here is made to the Pharaoh during the time of Moses (۞) who showed no mercy in his deadly pursuit of Allah's Messenger (۞) and the Israelis with him. The name of this Pharaoh is mentioned neither in the Qur'an, nor in the Exodus account of the Old Testament. Egyptologists differ in their views of who exactly the Pharaoh was at the time of the Exodus or during the lifetime of Mūsá (۞), which in all likelihood witnessed more than one.

Nebuchadnezzar (634–562BCE) – king of Babylonia (605–562BCE). As a result of his victory over the Assyrian-Egyptian alliance at Carchemish in 605BCE, he conquered all the lands from the Euphrates to the Egyptian frontier, including Judah. In 597BCE, after Judah revolted, he dispatched contingents that captured Jerusalem, replaced the young king Jehoiachin with his own nominee, Zedekiah, and exiled 8,000 of the local aristocracy to Babylon. Nebuchadnezzar's account of

these events is persevered in the British Museum. Eight years later, Zedekiah rebelled. The forces of Nebuchadnezzar, under Nebuzaradan again invaded



Judah, captured Jerusalem in 586BCE, and destroyed the Temple, laying waste the cities and exiling masses of the population. Zedekiah had taken refuge in Riblah, where Nebuchadnezzar had him slain. According to Jewish history, Nebuchadnezzar also figures in a number of legends related to the Book of Daniel. Refer also to Endnote 108 in Volume 4.

Titus – Roman emperor (79–81CE); son of Vespasian. He took over command of the Roman army in Judea from his father in 70CE, when he destroyed Jerusalem after a five-month siege. Some historical sources suggest that Titus endeavored — although unsuccessfully — to preserve the Temple, but others record the destruction as deliberate with the object of eliminating the national religious center of the Jews. Jewish tradition recalls him as “Titus, the wicked.” Despite the bitter battle in Judea, he did not interfere with Jewish rights elsewhere and refused to accede to the demand of the inhabitants of Antioch to abolish Jewish privileges there. This may have been due to the influence of his mistress Berenice.

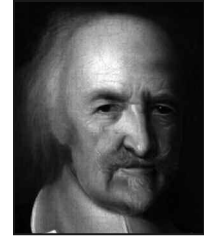


Adolf Hitler (1889–1945) – German National Socialist leader. Of Austrian birth, he joined the National Socialist German Workers’ party after serving in World War I and built it into a major force by exploiting an awareness of the “Jewish financial pressure group” in Germany. After becoming German chancellor in 1933, he imposed on the state a totalitarian regime with extreme militaristic tendencies. Internment camps were set up for Jews. His invasion of Poland in 1939 led to World War II. Hitler is said to have committed suicide as Soviet troops were advancing through Berlin. His impassioned bitterness toward the Jews stirred his followers and adherents to unspeakable excesses and was responsible, we are told, for the extermination of millions of Jews. Refer also to **Endnote 48** in Volume 1; Endnotes 43 and 173 in Volume 2; Endnotes 115–16 in Volume 3; pp. 315–16 and **Endnote 387** in Volume 5; pp. 150–52 and **Endnotes 241, 376, and 390** in Volume 7; and Endnote 565 in Volume 8.



127 **Thomas Hobbes** (1588–1679) – English political theorist, lifelong controversialist, and philosopher, often called the father of modern analytical philosophy. Obsessed by the civil disorders of the time, he wrote several works on government, including *Elements of Law* (1640) and *De cive* (*On the Citizen*, 1642). In 1646, he became mathematical tutor to the Prince of Wales at the exiled English court in Paris, where he wrote his masterpiece *Leviathan* (1651), presenting his mature thoughts on metaphysics, psycholo-

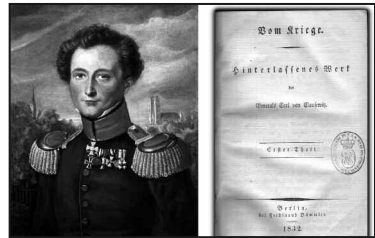
gy, and political philosophy. In *Leviathan*, he argued that sovereignty is vested in a ruler when the people agree to limit their freedom in return for protection. He was a thoroughgoing materialist, and argued that human beings are wholly selfish; enlightened self-interest explains the social contract in which they surrender the right of aggression to the sovereign state. Hobbes paved the way for Spinoza, Locke, Hume, Rousseau, and Bentham to develop concepts of human cooperation, as opposed to ruling authority, as the basis for social order. Refer also to Endnote 135 in Volume 1, Endnote 39 in Volume 2, and **Endnote 320** in Volume 7.



128 Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey (editors), *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*. (New York, New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 635.

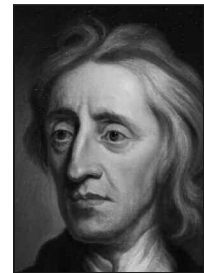
129 Ibid.

Carl von Clausewitz (1780–1831) – Prussian officer and writer on war, born near Magdeburg. His book *Vom Kriege* (*On War*, 1833), translated into English in 1873 by J.J. Graham, gave a new philosophical foundation to the art of war and put forward a concept of strategy that was influential until World War I. Refer also to **Endnote 369** in Volume 7.



130 **John Locke** (1632–1704) – English philosopher; his *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* (1690) maintained that experience was the only source of knowledge (empiricism), and that “we can have knowledge no farther than we have ideas” prompted by such experience. His *Two Treatises on Government* (1690) helped to form contemporary ideas of liberal democracy.

Locke studied at Oxford, practiced medicine, and in 1667 became secretary to the Earl of Shaftesbury. He consequently fell under suspicion as a Whig and in 1683 fled to Holland, where he lived until the 1688 revolution brought William of Orange to the English throne. In later life he published many works on philosophy, politics, theology, and economics; these include *Letters on Toleration* (1689–1692) and *Some Thoughts Concerning Education* (1693). His *Two Treatises on Government* supplied the classical statement of Whig theory and enjoyed great influence in America and France. It supposed that govern-



ments derive their authority from popular consent (regarded as a “contract”), so that a government may be rightly overthrown if it infringes such fundamental rights of the people as religious freedom. He believed that, at birth, the mind was a blank, and that all ideas came from sense impressions. Refer also to Endnote 104 in Volume 1, p. 68 in Volume 2, **Endnote 320** in Volume 7, and Endnote 608 in Volume 8.

131 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, p. 635.

Natural Law – in ethics and jurisprudence, a prescriptive law that defines how people ought to behave, and that is said to be rooted in human nature and rationality, not in convention or civil legislation. Notable natural law theorists include the Stoics, St. Thomas Aquinas (for whom natural law derived ultimately from divine law), Hugo Grotius, and Immanuel Kant.

132 **Passion Week** – the final week of Lent, which itself is a period of 40 days from Ash Wednesday to Holy Saturday.

133 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, p. 635.

134 **Hugo Grotius** (1583–1645) – Latin name of Huig de Groot; jurist and theologian, born in Delft, The Netherlands. He studied at Leyden, practiced in the Hague, and in 1613 was appointed pensionary (chief magistrate) of Rotterdam. In 1618, religious and political conflicts led to his imprisonment, but he escaped to Paris in 1621, where Louis XIII for a time gave him a pension. In 1625, he published his great work on international law, *De jure belli et pacis* (*On the Law of War and Peace*). He retired in 1645.



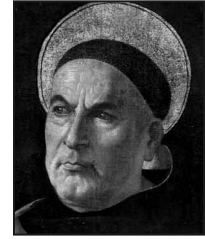
135 **Immanuel Kant** (1724–1804) – German philosopher who believed that knowledge is not merely an aggregate of sense impressions but is dependent on the conceptual apparatus of the human understanding, which itself is not derived from experience. In ethics, Kant argued that right action cannot be based on feelings or inclinations but conforms to a law given by reason, the categorical imperative. Born in Königsberg (in what was then East Prussia), he attended the university there, and was appointed professor of logic and metaphysics in 1770. His first book, *Gedanken von der wahren Schätzung der lebendigen Kräfte* (*Thoughts on the True Estimates of Living Forces*) appeared in 1747 and the *Theorie des Himmels* (*Theory of the Heavens*) in 1775. In the latter he combined physics and theology in an argument



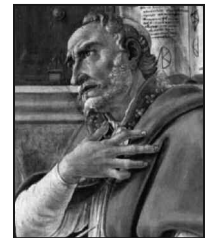
for the existence of God. In *Kritik der reinen Vernunft* (*Critique of Pure Reason*, 1781), he argued that God's existence could not be proved theoretically. Other works include *Prolegomena to Any Future Metaphysics that Will Be Able to Present Itself as a Science* (1783), *Metaphysische Anfangsgründe der Naturwissenschaft* (*Metaphysics of Nature*, 1786), *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft* (*Critique of Practical Reason*, 1788), and *Kritik der Urteilskraft* (*Critique of Judgment*, 1790). In 1797, ill health led to his retirement. Refer also to Endnote 114 in Volume 1, Endnote 132 in Volume 2, pp. 122, 212 in Volume 3, and **Endnote 382** in Volume 5.

136 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, p. 635–36.

137 **St. Thomas Aquinas** (1225–1274) – within a sizeable Judeo-Christian audience, considered to be the greatest thinker of the Scholastic School (not so much a philosophy or a theology as a method of learning, it places a strong emphasis on dialectical reasoning to extend knowledge by inference, and to resolve contradictions; its main theme was to reconcile Christian theology with classical and late antiquity philosophy, especially that of Aristotle and Neoplatonism). His ideas, it is said, make up the official Catholic philosophy. He incorporated Greek ideas into Christianity by showing Aristotle's thought to be compatible with Church doctrine. In his system, reason and faith (revelation) form two separate but harmonious realms whose truths complement rather than oppose one another. He presented influential philosophical proofs for the existence of God. His works include *Summa Theologica* and *On Being and Essence*. Refer also to **Endnote 128** in Volume 2; **pp. 212, 235, and 335**, and **Endnote 95** in Volume 3; pp. 36–37, and 71 in Volume 4; p. 212 in Volume 6; and **pp. 321–24**, and **Endnote 413** in Volume 7.



St. Augustine of Hippo (354–430CE) – considered by many in the religious Judeo-Christian world to be the greatest of the Latin church fathers and possibly the most influential Christian thinker after St. Paul. He successfully welded New Testament thought with Neoplatonism. Born in Africa, he was baptized a Christian at Milan in 387CE and spent the remainder of his life at Hippo (now 'Annābah in Algeria), first as a hermit, then as a bishop. St. Augustine emphasized man's need for grace. His *Confessions*, a spiritual autobiography, and *The City of God* were highly influential. Refer also to p. 71 and **Endnote 28** in Volume 4; **pp. 321–23 and 328**, and **Endnote 411** in Volume 7; and p. 337 and **Endnote 620** in Volume 8.



138 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, p. 636.

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

Cold War – see **Endnote 289** in Volume 5; and pp. 210 and 347, and Endnotes 379 and 390 in Volume 7.

141 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, p. 637.

142 **Johann Christoph Friedrich von Schiller** (1759–1805) – playwright, poet, and historian, born in Marbach, Germany. He attended a military academy, and became an army surgeon in Stuttgart, where he began to write *Sturm und Drang* (Storm and Stress) — German literary movement of the late-18th century that exalted nature, feeling, and human individualism and sought to overthrow the Enlightenment cult of Rationalism — verse and plays. The revolutionary appeal of his first play, *Die Rauber* (*The Robbers*, 1781), made it an instant success. He later settled in Dresden, where his works included the poem *An die Freude* (*Ode to Joy*), later set to music by Beethoven in his choral symphony. He became professor of history at Jena in 1788. His last decade was highly productive, including the dramatic trilogy, *Wallenstein* (1796–1799), held to be the greatest German historical drama, *Maria Stuart* (1800), and *Wilhelm Tell* (1804).



Ludwig van Beethoven (1770–1827) – composer, born in Bonn, Germany. Miserably brought up by a father who wanted him to become a profitable infant prodigy, he joined the Elector of Cologne's orchestra at Bonn. In 1787, he had lessons from Mozart in Vienna, and in 1792 returned to that city for good, apart from a few excursions. He first joined Prince Lichnowsky's household and studied under Haydn, Albrechtsberger, and possibly Salieri. His music is usually divided into three periods. In the first (1792–1802), which includes the first two symphonies, the first six quartets, and the *Pathétique* and *Moonlight* sonatas, his style gradually developed its own individuality. His second period (1803–1812) began with the *Eroica* symphony (1803), and includes his next five symphonies, the difficult *Kreutzer* sonata (1803), the *Violin Concerto*, the *Archduke* trio (1811), and the *Razumovsky* quartets. His third great period began in 1813, and includes the *Mass*, the *Choral* symphony (1823), and the last five quartets.



Beethoven was tolerated by Viennese society despite his physical unattractiveness and arrogance. Just as he was developing a reputation as a composer, he began to go deaf, but stoically accepted the fact. None of this stopped him from falling in love with his pupils, including Giulietta Guicciardi and Josephine von Brunswick. From 1812, he was increasingly assailed by health, business, and family worries, which included prolonged litigation to obtain custody of his dead brother's son, Karl. His last work was completed in 1826 at Gneixendorf, where he developed a severe chill (exacerbated by returning to Vienna in an open chaise), from which he died.

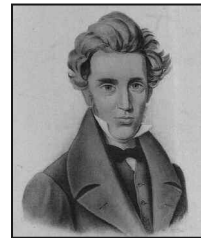
143 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, p. 637.

144 Ibid.

145 *Sūrah al-Aḥzāb* (33:46).

146 **St. Ignatius of Antioch** (35–107CE) – one of the apostolic fathers, reputedly a disciple of St. John and the second Bishop of Antioch. According to Eusebius, he died a martyr in Rome. The Ignatian Epistles, whose authenticity was long controversial, were written on his way to Rome after he was arrested. They are valued by some as insights into the nature of the early church.

147 **Soren Kierkegaard** (1813–1855) – Danish philosopher considered to be the founder of existentialism. Disagreeing with the German dialectical philosopher, Hegel, he argued that no system of thought could explain the unique experience of the individual. He defended Christianity, suggesting that God cannot be known through reason, but only through a “leap of faith.” He believed that God and exceptional individuals were above moral laws. Kierkegaard was born in Copenhagen, where he spent most of his life. The son of a Jewish merchant, he converted to Christianity in 1838, although he became hostile to the established Church and his beliefs caused much controversy. He was a prolific author; his chief works include *Enten-Eller* (*Either-Or*, 1843), *Begrebet Angest* (*Concept of Dread*, 1844), and *Efterskrift* (*Postscript*, 1846), which summed up much of his earlier writings. Refer also to p. 320 and **Endnote 116** in Volume 1; and p. 234 and **Endnote 115** in Volume 3.



148 **Ebionites** – literally, *poor men*, a Judeo-Christian sect of the early Christian era, opposed by Irenaeus in the late-2nd century CE. They were apparently ascetic, and continued to observe rigorously the Jewish Law. They also

believed that Jesus (ﷺ) was the Messiah, a virtuous man anointed by the Spirit, but not truly “divine.”

Docetism – the belief, arising in early Christianity, that the natural body of Jesus Christ was only apparent (from the Greek word *dokeo*, meaning *to appear* or *seem*) and not real, thereby stressing the divinity of Christ and denying any real physical suffering on his part. Though it was especially prevalent amongst 2nd-century Gnostics, the position was indicted in the Book of 2 John, verse 7, “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

149 **Arius** (256–336CE) – Alexandrian (Egyptian) priest who held that Christ was a created, and not a divine being. This became a “European” controversy that was labeled a heresy and raged until his death (336CE).

Nicene Creed – one of the fundamental creeds of Euro-Christianity, promulgated by the Council of Nicaea (325CE).

150 **Apollinaris of Laodicea** (died 390CE) – Bishop of Laodicea, whose views on the nature of Christ were condemned by the Council of Constantinople (381CE), but who nonetheless laid the foundations for Nestorianism. Rather than seeing the nature of Jesus as a human and divine soul somehow joined in the person of Christ, he saw Christ as having a divine mind only, and not a human one.

Nestorius (386–450CE) – Syrian Christian and Archbishop of Constantinople from 428–431CE. He is the author of the European designated heresy that Mary (ﷺ), being human, should not be called the mother of God. This view was condemned at the Council of Ephesus (431CE).

Eutyches (384–456CE) – Christian theologian. An archimandrite (monastic head) in Constantinople, he held that Jesus (ﷺ) had only one nature, the human nature being subsumed in the divine (a belief which became known as Monophysitism). He was exiled after his ideas were condemned by the Council of Chalcedon (451CE).

151 **Council of Chalcedon** (451CE) – a council of the Church that settled on the notion of Jesus being truly God and truly man at the same time — two natures in one entity (the Chalcedonian definition). The definition is generally accepted by the churches, though from the beginning there was uneasiness about its interpretation, and recently it has come under sustained criticism.

152 **Protestant Reformation** – Protestant reform movements in the Christian Church, inspired by and derived from Martin Luther, John Calvin, Ulrich Zwingli, and others in 16th-century Europe. A complex phenomenon, various factors were common to all reforms: a Biblical revival and translation of the Word of God into the vernacular; improvement in the intellectual and moral standards of the clergy; emphasis on the sovereignty of God; and insistence that faith and scriptures are at the center of the Christian message. Non-religious factors aiding the spread of the Reformation included the invention of the printing press; the political, social, and economic uncertainties of the age; and a general feeling of revival caused by the Renaissance.

In Germany, Luther's *Ninety-Five Theses* (1517) questioned the authority of the Church and led to his excommunication. The Lutheran Church then spread rapidly, in Switzerland under Zwingli and later under Calvin, neither of whom allowed any form of worship or devotion not explicitly warranted by scripture. The authority of scripture, the cornerstone of the Reformation, required a degree of ecclesiastical authority (and power) to justify and maintain it. The doctrine of the priesthood of all believers and the importance placed on preaching the Word of God led to an educated clergy, and decentralized church communities were better able to prevent abuse of ecclesiastical privilege. In England, Henry VIII declared that the king was the supreme head of the English Church, and appropriated Church property; in 1549 the *Book of Common Prayer*, embodying Reformation doctrine, was published, and under Elizabeth I, a strong anti-papal stance was taken. In Scotland, under the influence of Calvin and the leadership of John Knox, the Presbyterian Church of Scotland was established in 1560, and remains the national church. The Reformation also took root as Lutheran and Reformed Churches in France, Scandinavia, and the Czech and Slovak areas (Hungary, Romania, and Poland).

153 **Monophysitism** – a term denoting that Jesus Christ had only a divine nature after the Incarnation — *mono-* meaning *one*, and *-physite* meaning *nature*. This controversial view about the essence of Christ's divine-human nature significantly agitated the Eastern churches from the fourth through the sixth centuries and prompted formation of the Coptic, Abyssinian, Jacobite, and Armenian churches.

The long theological-political contention in the 4th century over Christ's humanity-divinity in relation to the Father was seemingly settled at the Council of Constantinople in 381CE. However, the mode of the union of the divine and human natures in Christ soon inflamed the East. Leaders who stressed Christ's divinity at the expense of his humanity became known as Monophysites. Apollinaris, Gregory of Nazianzus, Eutyches, Jacobus Barbadæus, and Julian of Halicarnassus were so depicted. The orthodox view of the two natures in Christ reflected Cyril of Alexandria's thought and was

championed by Pope Leo I, who sent his famous Tome to the Council of Chalcedon in 451CE. Dominated by Leo, Chalcedon declared that Christ was truly human and truly divine without any “confusion, division, separation, or loss of the two natures in the single person of Christ.” Many Eastern church leaders who desired to exalt the divinity of Christ rejected this declaration and formed Monophysite churches.

154 **Pierre Teilhard de Chardin** (1881–1955) – French paleontologist, geologist, and philosopher. He entered the Jesuit order (1899), was ordained (1911), and received a doctorate in paleontology from the Sorbonne (1922). He lectured (1920–1923) at the Institut Catholique in Paris. After visiting China (1923–1924), he resumed teaching at the Institut, but in 1926 was forced by his superiors to abandon teaching and return to China because of his controversial attempts to reconcile the traditional view of original sin with his concept of evolution; at that time it was also decided that his publications should be limited to purely scientific material, a limitation that continued throughout his lifetime.



Shortly after his return to China, Teilhard was named adviser to the National Geological Survey, and in that capacity he collaborated on research that resulted in the discovery (1929) of Peking man (*Homo erectus pekinensis*). While in China (1926–1946) he also completed the manuscript of *The Phenomenon of Man* (published posthumously, 1955), in which he outlined his concept of cosmic evolution and his conviction that belief in evolution does not entail a rejection of Christianity. Evolution he saw to be a process involving all matter, not just biological material, the cosmos undergoing successively more complex changes that would lead ultimately to the *Omega Point*, which has been variously interpreted as the integration of all personal consciousness and as the second coming of Christ.

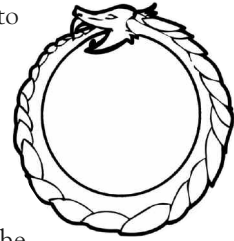
Teilhard's evolutionism earned him the distrust of his religious superiors, while his religious mysticism made scientific circles suspicious; but despite much opposition — or perhaps because of it — there was an unusually broad popular response to his work after its posthumous publication. The interest may be explained by his boldly anthropocentric, and somewhat mystical, understanding of the cosmos: humanity for him is the axis of the cosmic flow, the key of the universe.

Teilhard de Chardin's other works (all published posthumously) include *Letters from a Traveller* (1956), *The Divine Milieu* (1957), *The Future of Man* (1959), *Human Energy* (1962), *Activation of Energy* (1963), and *Hymn of the Universe*, published in 1964 (source: <http://www.teilhardforbeginners.com/biography.html>).

155 **Zoroastrianism** – the worship of a supreme God, Ahura Mazda, in Iran during the first millennium BCE. Rites of worship were performed by priests (Magi), and there was a body of scriptures called Avesta, the earliest part of which was formed of hymns attributed to a religious teacher, Zoroaster. The arrival of Islam forced Zoroastrianism out of Persia, and today it is practiced by Parsis, most of whom are to be found in the Indian subcontinent.



156 **Manichaeism** or **Manichaeism** – a religious sect said to be founded by a prophet called Manes (or Mani) 216–276CE, who began teaching in Persia in 240CE. Based on a primeval conflict between the realm of light and darkness, in which the material world represents an invasion of the realm of light by the powers of darkness, the purpose of religion is to release the particles of light imprisoned in matter, and Buddha, the prophets, Jesus, and finally Mani have been sent to help in this task. Release involved adherence to a strict ascetic regimen. The Zoroastrians condemned the sect and executed Mani, but nonetheless, it spread rapidly in the West, surviving until the 10th century CE. It also expanded into Tang China after its introduction by the Persians in 694CE, especially after its adoption as the official religion of the Uighur Turks in Mongolia and North China in 763CE. It was banned in China from 843CE, though some influence remained in astronomy and the calendar, in both China and Japan.



157 Recorded by Ibn Ishāq, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, and al-Bayhaqī.

158 See John, 3:1–21.

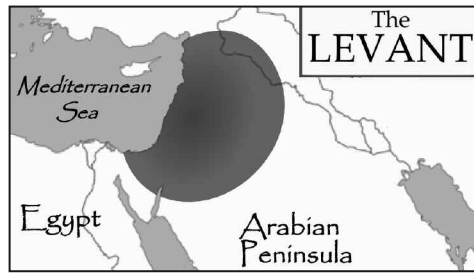
159 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās and recorded by Ibn Ishāq, Abū Ja'far Muḥammad ibn Jarīr al-Ṭabarī, Ibn al-Mundhir, Ibn Abī Ḥātim, and al-Bayhaqī in his *Dalā'il*.

Other *mufassirs*, in a slight variation, identify the two Jews as Rāfi' ibn Ḥuraymalāh and Wahb ibn Yahūdihā.

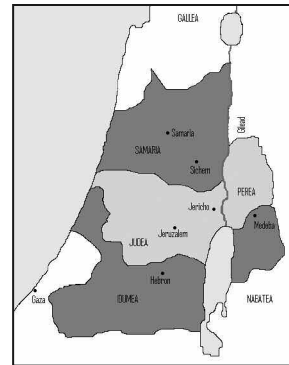
160 There is a Judeo-Christian misinterpretation about Dāwūd and Sulaymān (David and Solomon – 𐤃𐤕𐤁𐤀), as many of them do not regard these two as prophets. To them, they are only wise men or kings. And once again they are in error.


161 Narrated by Mu'ādh ibn Jabal and recorded by Ibn 'Asākir.

162 **Levant** – Eastern Mediterranean region, or more specifically, the coastal regions of Turkey-in-Asia, Syria, Lebanon, and Palestine; it has been described as the “cross-roads of western Asia, the eastern Mediterranean, and northeast Africa.” Most Levantine populations speak Arabic, though there are pockets who speak Greek, Turkish, Cypriot Maronite Arabic (a dialect), Armenian, Circassian, French, and English. The majority of the population is Muslim Arab, though there are many Levantine Christian groups (Greek and Oriental Orthodox, Maronite, Roman Catholic, and Protestant) in addition to Armenians, Circassians, Turks, Samaritans, Nawars, and Assyrians. Before the Zionist-imperialist occupation of Palestine in 1948, Jews lived throughout the southern Levant alongside Muslims and Christians.



163 **Hasmoneans** – in Judeo-Christian narratives of history, the name given to John Hyrcanus and his successors as priestly and political leaders of the Jews in Palestine. The Hasmonean dynasty lasted from 134–63BCE, when the Romans under Pompey assumed direct control of the land. The graphic depicts the Hasmonean Kingdom under John Hyrcanus.



Since both kingship and the high priesthood in Israel were hereditary (the kings, from David; the high priests, from Aaron – ) the move by the Maccabean family to claim both titles was a source of conflict among Jews. Finally, in the reign of Simon (143–134BCE), the last surviving son of Mattathias, the dual role was recognized by the Jews. They were so impressed by Simon's diplomatic negotiations with the Romans and with the relative security this relationship brought that they acclaimed him as “...leader and high priest forever, until a trustworthy prophet should arise” (1 Maccabees, 14:41). The dynasty was later given the name of “Hasmoneans,” apparently derived from the name of Mattathias' great-grandfather, Asamonaeus (in Hebrew, Hasmonah), as the historian Josephus attests in his *Antiquities of the Jews*.

The Judeo-Christian historical version of this era covers the preoccupation of the Seleucid ruler Antiochus VII with the Parthians, who were press-

ing him on the northeastern border of Syria, which enabled John Hyrcanus to capture extensive territory and flourishing cities east of the Jordan and down into the southern desert (Negev). It is said that he destroyed the temple of the Samaritans as well as their capital city.

An important new factor was the rise of two sharply divided religio-political parties in this period: the Sadducees and the Pharisees. The former, as wealthy traditionalists, exercised considerable power, while the latter, with their emphasis on the contemporary relevance of the Law, had a wider popular appeal and influence with the masses. The Hasmonean rulers had to reckon with these forces in shaping internal and external policies. The requirement that some of the subject peoples, such as the Arab Semites in the east Jordanian territory, submit to circumcision and other scriptural requirements was to have profound significance for the future of Palestine, when the Arabian Semites moved into positions of influence and power. The Pharisees' demand that John Hyrcanus abandon the priesthood, because of some doubts about the purity of his ancestry, was rejected by him, and led him to side with the Sadducees. At his death he was succeeded for a brief period (104–103BCE) by his son, Aristobulus I, who was the first in the Maccabean line to take the title of king, in addition to his role as high priest.

Under the fratricidal struggle for power under Aristobulus I, Alexander Jannaeus emerged as king and high priest. His long reign (103–76BCE) was marked by conflict with the Ptolemaic, Seleucid, and Nabatean (Arabian) monarchs. The series of defeats wrought by Ptolemy Lathyrus in the coastal cities and in the Jordan Valley nearly deprived Alexander of much of his domain. By flattering Cleopatra, Ptolemy's mother, and showering her with gifts, he was able not only to regain control, but also to capture additional cities and lands on the Mediterranean and east of the Jordan. Many Jews were opposed to him, however, charging that he was unfit for office by reason of the impurity of his ancestors. When he appeared at a feast in the Temple, he was pelted with citrons. In retaliation, he slaughtered 6,000 of them. So unpopular was he that foreigners had to be hired as soldiers in order for him to maintain order. On another occasion, while feasting with his concubines, he had 800 Jews crucified (!), and then had their wives and children killed as the fathers watched from the crosses. Before he died from alcoholism, he counseled his wife, Salome Alexandra, to ingratiate herself to the Pharisees.

After Alexander Jannaeus' death, Alexandra reigned as queen (76–69BCE) and her son, Hyrcanus II, became high priest. Josephus, in *Antiquities*, remarks that "...she had the title of sovereign, but the Pharisees had the power." Internal conflict and decadence in the Seleucid dynasty enabled Armenians to move into Syria, a development that led the Romans under Pompey to interfere directly, eventually converting Syria into a province of Rome. In order to put down unrest on the eastern border, Pompey subdued Asia Minor all the way to the Caucasus.

While Alexandra had fallen ill, her son, Aristobulus II, began to plot and fight to assume royal power — a goal he achieved at his mother's death in 69BCE. His struggle with his brother Hyrcanus II for the throne gave Pompey the occasion to invade Palestine. Both sides tried to bribe the Roman leaders, but Pompey marched on Jerusalem despite their offers. Partisans of Hyrcanus II opened the city gates to Pompey; Aristobulus II, backed by the Sadducees, retreated to the Temple mount, which fell to Pompey in 63BCE. Pompey horrified the Jews by entering the Holy of Holies, where only priests were permitted. Hyrcanus II's son married Aristobulus II's daughter; their daughter Mariamme married Herod, son of the Idumean (Arabian) opportunist "Antipater," who had been adviser to Hyrcanus II and who helped the Romans consolidate power over Palestine and the east Jordan territories. By reason of his descent from the Hasmoneans, Herod claimed a right to the royal title, which the Romans bestowed on him (37–34BCE).

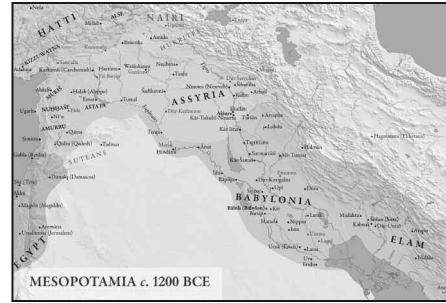
Dan – an area between Şaydā (Sidon) and Şūr (Tyre) in today's Lebanon.

164 **Sea of Galilee** or **Lake Tiberias** – ancient **Sea of Chinnereth** covering 166km² (64 square miles); in Hebrew, it is known as **Yam Kinneret**. Today, it is a lake in northern Palestine, in the Jordan valley, 210m (689 feet) below sea level with a length of 22.5km (14 miles), a width of 12km (7.5 miles), and a maximum depth of 46m (150 feet); it is fed and drained by the nation-state of Jordan. The Zionist regime's largest reservoir, its water is piped as far as the Negev Desert; the first kibbutz was founded to the south of it in 1909. There are many centers around the lake of historic and scriptural interest, especially connected with the life of Jesus (✠).



Damascus – Dimashq (in Arabic); capital city of Syria, on the Baradā River, with a population today of over half a million. It is claimed to be the world's oldest continuously inhabited city; in ancient times it was a great trade and commercial center. Famous for its crystallized fruits, brass and copper ware, silks, woodwork, medieval citadel (1219), Great Masjid (8th century CE, burned in 1893, then restored), and ancient Via Recta, which runs east-west for 1,500m (5,000 feet) with Roman gateways at either end, the entire city is considered a world heritage site. Its satellite city, Dimashq al-Jadīdah ("New Damascus") has an airport, a railway, and a university (established, 1923).

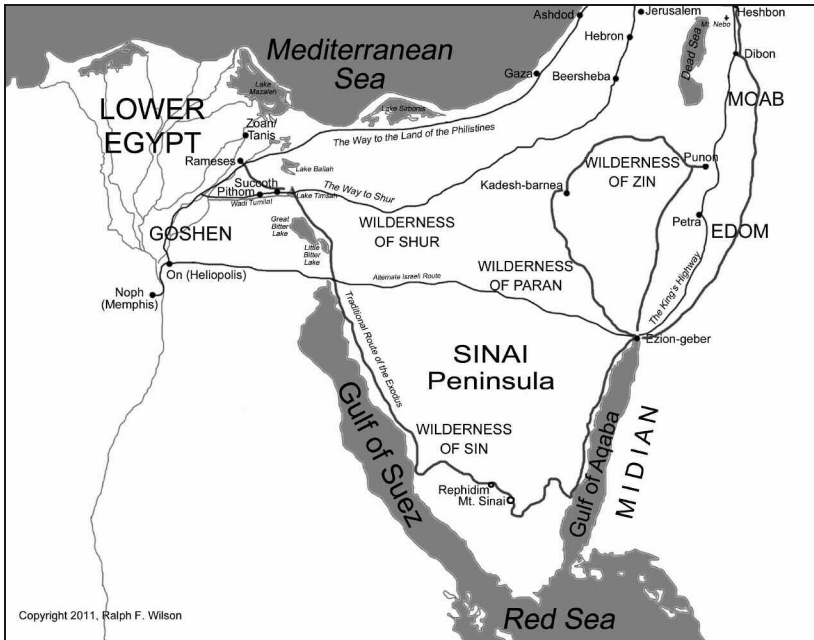
Mesopotamia – literally, *the land between the rivers*, the name in antiquity stands for the area between the Tigris and the Euphrates Rivers; now part of Iraq. It was conventionally divided into two zones: Lower Mesopotamia, the home of the Sumerian and Babylonian civilizations (3500BCE), stretching from the alluvial plain at the head of the Persian Gulf to Baghdad (Iraq); and Upper Mesopotamia, the home of the Assyrians, extending from Baghdad to the foothills of East Turkey. Historically, the former is more important, since the world’s first urban civilization emerged there during the fourth millennium BCE.



165 **‘Aqabah** (ancient **Aelana**) – geostrategic seaport in southwest Jordanian governorate that goes by the same name; at its south end is the Gulf of ‘Aqabah on the border with occupied Palestine. It was a key port on the ancient trade route through the Red Sea-Great Rift Valley (Jordan), but today under the Sykes-Picot nation-state setup, it is Jordan’s only outlet to the sea. Home to an airport and a railway, it functions as a container terminal facility for phosphates and fertilizers; indigenous industries include thermal power, timber processing, and tourism, which makes it a popular winter seaside resort. ‘Aqabah’s population today is less than 100,000.



166 **Sinai** – desert peninsula (60,174km² or 23,227 square miles) and governorate in northeast Egypt, with capital city of al-‘Arish; bounded by Zionist-occupied territories. The north coastal plain rises in the south to mountains reaching 2,637m (8,651 feet) at Mt. Catherine, Egypt’s highest point, and 2,286m (7,500 feet) at Mt. Sinai. A battlefield since ancient times, today it produces fossil fuels and manganese in addition to some livestock and agriculture in irrigated areas. It was militarily occupied by the Zionist interlopers in 1967, but then “returned” to Egypt following the Camp David Accords (1984). With a population of over 300,000, many of whom work in the tourism industry, it sports resorts in the south including Sharm al-Shaykh, Dahab, Rās Muḥammad, and Nuwayba‘ (the graphic on the facing page illustrates one of the proposed routes of the Exodus from Egypt).



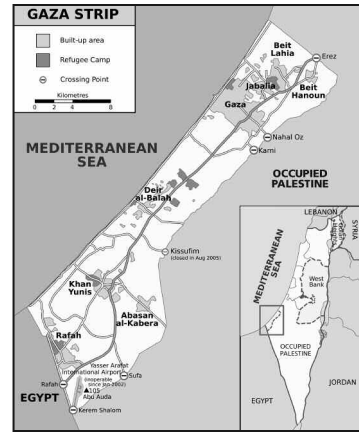
Samaria – the site in central Palestine of the ancient capital of the North Kingdom of the Hebrews. Destroyed by the Assyrians around 722BCE, Herod the Great (74/73–4BCE; reigned 37–4BCE) rebuilt and enlarged it in the 20s BCE. It remained a flourishing Greek-style city throughout the Roman period. It is now in the Zionist-occupied West Bank of Palestine (refer to the graphic for Endnote 168).

Megiddo – site of a fortress town in northern Palestine, where Thothmes III defeated the Canaanites in the vicinity of 1469BCE. The Old Testament figure Josiah was said to have been killed in battle there in 609BCE. In WWI the British field marshal Allenby broke the Turkish front in that area (1918). It is identified with Armageddon (refer to the graphic for Endnote 180).

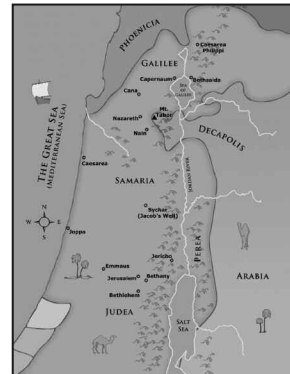
167 **Ghazzah** (the **Gaza Strip**) – a narrow strip of land bounded northwest by the Mediterranean Sea, with area of 202 km² (78 square miles) and length of 50km (30 miles). Its major city goes by the same name, Ghazzah (Gaza City). Formerly part of Egyptian Sinai after the Zionist war of occupation (1948–1949), it became a Zionist-Israeli-occupied district under military administration after the 1967 war, containing many Palestinian refugee camps (1967–1994). This was succeeded by a titular Palestinian authority presence following a US-brokered non-belligerence agreement (1993), with the Palestine Liberation Organization (PLO) assigning it to a future Palestin-

ian state. In 2005, the Zionists declared an end to their military occupation of the Gaza Strip, dismantled all of their colonies there, and gave the Palestinian Authority administrative control of the Strip; however according to the 1993 Oslo Accords, “Israel will hold sole control of Gaza airspace and will continue to carry out military activity in the waters of the Gaza Strip... Therefore, Israel continues to maintain exclusive control of Gaza’s airspace and the territorial waters, just as it has since it occupied the Gaza Strip in 1967.” There has been considerable tension in the area after the beginning of the *intifadah* (uprising) in 1988.

In the first free and fair election of the occupied territories (2006), the Palestinian people chose Hamas, instead of the Palestinian Authority, to be their legal and legitimate representatives in the parliament (Hamas won 74 out of 132 seats). When Hamas assumed power in the month after the election, the Zionists, the United States, the European Union, Russia, and the United Nations demanded that Hamas accept all previous agreements, recognize Israel’s right to exist, and lay down its armaments (though they never requested the Zionists to do the same); when Hamas refused, they cut off all direct aid (financial and otherwise) to the Palestinian Authority as well as Hamas. This ultimately led to the barbaric siege imposed by the Zionists and their imperialist enablers on Ghazzah to punish the Palestinian people for electing Hamas, and to try and separate the people from their elected representation. This siege, which has turned Ghazzah into an open-air prison (dare we say, concentration camp), has endured three wars and lasts yet through the publication of this volume (2015).



168 **Judea** – Roman-Greek name for south Palestine, an area now occupied by the Zionist and the Jordanian governments. Southernmost of the Roman divisions of Palestine, it rises to 1,020m (3,346 feet) in the south near al-Khalil (Hebron), and its most important city is al-Quds (Jerusalem). Following the war of Zionist occupation (1948–1949) the western region became part of the illegitimate Zionist occupation authority, and the eastern region became part of the illegitimate Jordanian government; since the 1967 war, the West Bank of Palestine along



with Eastern Jerusalem have become territories occupied by the Zionist government (the graphic illustrates Judea in the time of Herod the Great).

169 **Book of Judges** – a book of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, with “judges” referring to the tribal heroes (such as Deborah, Gideon, and Samson) whose acts of leadership are described. It recounts the unstable period between the initial conquest of Palestine by the Israelis and the establishment of a monarchy over Palestine, and it attempts to draw moral lessons from the contrasting examples of good and bad leadership. Its stories probably underwent editing, doctoring, and redaction during several stages of Israeli history.

170 **Dead Sea** (ancient, **Lacus Asphaltites**) – in Arabic and Hebrew, it is called **Baḥrah Lūt** (Sea of Lot), and in the Old Testament, it is referred to as the **Salt Sea**, the **Sea of the Plain**, or the **East Sea**. The lowest point on earth at 400m (1,312 feet) below sea level, it is an inland lake in the Great Rift Valley on the Jordan and Palestine border. The Dead Sea is fed by the Jordan River from the north, but has no outlet. As one of the most saline lakes in the world, containing magnesium, sodium, potassium, and calcium salts, it is known as such because the high salt content prevents any vegetation from growing there. Its potash and magnesium bromide have been exploited since 1921. Because water from the Jordan River is being used for irrigation and residential supply, the sea’s level has been dropping, and hence, there are plans for a direct link with the Mediterranean to stabilize sea levels. The Dead Sea is also a magnet for tourists, and its salts have been widely exported for therapeutic baths and other medicinal purposes (refer to the graphics for Endnotes 166 and 168).

Masada or **Mezada** – a Roman hilltop fortress established around 37–31BCE by the Hasmonean ruler Herod the Great in the barren mountains west of the Dead Sea; since 1947, it has been within occupied Palestine. After it was seized by zealots during the First Jewish Revolt in 66–70CE, it was taken by the Roman army in 73CE after a lengthy siege that culminated in the mass suicide of all 400 defenders. As a political symbol of Jewish solidarity and resistance through the ages, it remains peculiar.

171 **Moab** – encompassed in biblical times the fertile land that extends eastward from the Dead Sea about 30 miles to the western edge of the Arabian desert. On the south it was bordered by Edom, divided from it by Wādī al-Ḥasā (some would say it is the “brook of Zered” of Deuteronomy, 2:13). Its northern boundary was always in dispute, but nominally the Arnon gorge (the modern Wādī al-Mujīb) separated it first from the Amorite kingdom of Sihon and later from the Transjordanian State of Israel. The distance between the two valleys (*wādīs*) north to south is approximately 60 miles.

The Moabite plateau, rising all the way from 2,000–4,000 feet, was largely a pastureland, since climatic conditions and the proximity of the desert rendered agriculture difficult (refer to the graphic on p. 421).

172 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Volume 6, p. 326.

173 **diaspora** – German word for *scattering*; the Hebrew equivalent is *golah* or *galut* for *exile*. Also known as the Dispersion, the Diaspora represents the scattering of Jews in the world outside Palestine from either voluntary or compulsory resettlements, such as the Assyrian and Babylonian deportations in the 8th century and 6th century BCE, or later dispersions in the Greco-Roman period. The Babylonian Talmud and the Septuagint (a translation of the Hebrew Bible into Greek) were important literary products of those Jews who had settled “abroad.”

174 **Amalekites** – an ancient nomadic people, notorious for their fickleness, who lived south of Canaan. According to the Book of Genesis (36:12), they were descended from Esau, the older son of Isaac (㉟).

175 **Rephidim** – in Jewish history it is one of the Israelis’ stopping-places between the Wilderness of Sin and the Sinai Desert (Numbers, 33:14–15). While the people were encamped there, Moses (㉟) struck the rock at Mt. Horeb and a supply of drinking water issued forth. At Rephidim, the Israelis under Joshua repelled a surprise attack of the Amalekites (Exodus, 17). The exact location of Rephidim is uncertain, as some Jewish scholars suggest a site in the south of the Sinai Peninsula, while others suggest one in the north (refer to the graphic on p. 421).

176 **Ziklag** – ancient Palestinian city in the territory of the tribe of Simeon. According to Jewish tradition, in Saul’s time, Ziklag was held by the Philistines who handed it to David (㉟) and it remained thereafter in the territory of Judah (1 Samuel, 27:6).

177 **Simeon** – the second son of Jacob (㉟) according to Jewish historians. Out of zeal for the good name of his sister Dinah, he and Levi tricked the citizens of Shechem, captured the town, slaughtered its male inhabitants, and took captive the women and children (Genesis, 34). Jacob (㉟) objected to these acts and, it is said in his final benediction, prophesied the dispersion of the descendants of Simeon and Levi among the other tribes. The tribe of Simeon received territory of minor importance in Palestine within the lot of Judah in two distinct localities of the Negev. In the reign of Hezekiah, they took possession of the Arabian areas of Seir (1 Chronicles, 4:24–43). Some of them apparently settled in the Mountains of Ephraim (2 Chronicles, 15:9).

178 **Haman** – according to Jewish history is the chief minister of Ahasuerus, king of Persia. His resentment of the independent attitude of Mordecai led him to detest all Jews and he planned their annihilation. When his scheme was frustrated by Esther, Haman and his sons were hanged. In memory of their deliverance, the Jews observe the festival of Purim. Haman is called “the Agagite,” which was interpreted by the rabbis to indicate his descent from Agag, king of Amalek. Scholars of the Jewish faith differ as to his historicity. The name Haman has become synonymous with an enemy of the Jews.

Agag – Amalekite king captured by Saul, who spared his life. Samuel regarded this as a transgression of the divine command to wipe out the Amalekites and hewed Agag into pieces (1 Samuel, 15).

179 **Kadesh** – name of several ancient places in Palestine. One of the best-known was in the Wilderness of Zin — a stopping-place for the Israelis in their wanderings (Numbers, 33:36). It was situated on the frontier of Edom, near what came to be known as Petra (refer to the graphic on p. 421).

Paran Desert – “wilderness” in the Negev, and according to Jewish history was the home of Ishmael (ﷻ). Apparently situated northeast of the traditional Mt. Sinai, south of Kadesh, and extending to the shores of the Gulf of Elath and Wādi ‘Arabah, it was traversed by the Israelis after they left Mt. Sinai. Its name has been recently revived, replacing the former Wādi Jarafī that crosses the Palestinian Naqab or Negev (refer to the graphic on p. 421).

Anakim – people who, according to biblical tradition, lived in Canaan before its conquest by the Israelis. They inhabited the mountainous area of Judah and also the south coastal zone, but were exterminated in the time of Joshua. The Anakim have not yet been identified by anthropologists; it is said that they were tall in stature (Numbers, 13:32–33) and the word in Hebrew has come to denote giants.

Hittites – ancient people inhabiting Asia Minor. From the 15th century BCE their power extended southward to Syria. Even after the main kingdom fell around 1,200BCE, small Hittite kingdoms continued to flourish in northern Syria and in the vicinity of the Euphrates. These states were eventually overrun by the Armenians and the Assyrians. The Bible connects the Hittites with the Canaanites (Genesis, 10:15) and indicates that some dwelt in Palestine at an early period. Abraham (ﷻ), it is said, purchased the cave at Machpelah from Hittites, while Esau took wives from among them. The Hittites were one of the seven peoples from whom the Israelis conquered Canaan. Later, David had Hittite warriors, and Solomon (ﷻ), Hittite wives.

Jebusites – Canaanite people who had settled in Palestine prior to the Israeli conquest. They lived in the hill region, principally around Jerusalem, which they called Jebus. Although Joshua defeated a Jebusite-led coalition, Jerusalem was occupied only in the reign of David (2 Samuel, 5:6–7). The last Jebusite king was apparently Araunah (2 Samuel, 24:16). The Jebusites remained in the city under David and became tributaries under Solomon (📖). In the course of time, they appear to have been assimilated.

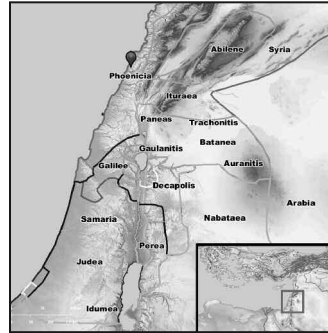
Amorites – one of the biblical names for the inhabitants of Canaan before the Israeli scriptural presence in the area. The name is applied to (1) the entire population of the country at that period; and (2) one of the ancient peoples of the country, annihilated or assimilated into the scriptural regional order via David and Solomon (📖). The name is also mentioned in both cuneiform (ancient wedge-shaped script used in Mesopotamia and Persia) and hieroglyphic (used in ancient Egypt, a writing system employing picture symbols) sources where its significance is not constant: on some occasions it is an ethnographic term, probably denoting the West Semitic tribes, and on others it is a geographical term, denoting the whole area of Syria and Palestine. From the middle of the 2nd millennium BCE, there was an Amorite state in central and southern Syria incorporating the Lebanese Mountains and important harbor towns. It constituted an important link between Egypt and Mesopotamia and, after a long struggle between Egypt and the Hittite Kingdom, was annexed to the latter. The Amorites are mentioned in the Bible from patriarchal times. They were settled on both sides of the Jordan River, especially in mountainous regions. Moses (📖) is credited with the conquest of two Amorite kingdoms (Heshbon and Bashan). At this period, the Amorites were no longer a pure West Semitic element but mixed with other strains in Palestine, especially the Horites and Hittites. “The ways of the Amorite” is a term applied in rabbinic and medieval literature to folk-practices alien to the spirit of Judaism.

Caleb – a member of the Kenizzite family; one of the leaders of the tribe of Judah during the time the Jews were wandering in the desert. Out of the 12 spies dispatched by Moses (📖) to reconnoiter the land of Canaan, he and Joshua were the only two who brought back a favorable report. As a reward, they were the sole survivors of the mass Jewish exodus from Egypt to enter Palestine. Promised an inheritance at Hebron, Caleb captured the place and expelled its inhabitants, the Anakim — the gigantic people. A region of the Negev and a leading family of Judah were long known by his name.

Nephilim – semi-legendary race in the antediluvian era (prior to the Flood), begotten, according to the Book of Genesis (6:4), by the union of the “sons of God” and the “daughters of man.” The spies dispatched by Moses (📖)

applied the term hyperbolically to the inhabitants of the Land of Canaan (Numbers, 13:33).

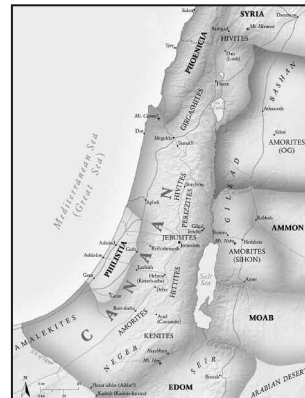
180 **Phoenicia** – ancient Greek name for northern Canaan on the east coast of the Mediterranean. The Phoenicians lived from about 1200–332 BCE. Seafaring traders and artisans, they are said to have circumnavigated Africa and established colonies in Cyprus, North Africa (for example, Carthage), Malta, Sicily, and Spain. Their main cities (Tyre, Sidon, and Byblos) were independent states ruled by hereditary kings but dominated by merchant ruling classes. The fall of Tyre to Alexander the Great ended the separate history of Phoenicia.



The Phoenicians occupied the seaboard of Lebanon and Syria, north of Mt. Carmel. Their exports included Tyrian purple dye and cloth, furniture (from the timber of Lebanon), and jewelry. Documents found in 1929 at Ugarit on the Syrian coast give much information on their civilization and their deities including Baal, Astarte or Ishtar, and Moloch. Competition from the colonies combined with attacks by the Sea Peoples — the Assyrians — and the Greeks on the cities in Phoenicia led to their ultimate decline.

Canaan – ancient region between the Mediterranean and the Dead Sea, called in the Bible the “Promised Land” of the Israelis. It was occupied as early as the 3rd millennium BCE by the Canaanites, a Semitic people who were known to the Greeks of the 1st millennium BCE as Phoenicians. The capital was Ebla (now, Tall Mardikh, Syria).

At one time the Canaanite Empire included Syria, Palestine, and part of Mesopotamia. It was conquered by the Israelis during the 13th–10th centuries BCE. Ebla’s excavation (1976–1977) revealed an archive of inscribed tablets dating from the 3rd millennium BCE, which includes place names such as Ghazzah and al-Quds (Jerusalem).



181 **Deborah** – the famous Deborah of the Bible is the heroine of the Book of Judges (Chapters 4 and 5), who is variously termed a prophetess and a judge (Judges, 4:4), a mother in Israel (Judges, 5:7), and a songstress (Judges, 5:12). The designation “prophetess,” in the sense of a charismatic national figure

who handed down oracles promising victory over the people's enemies in the name of the covenant deity (for example, 1 Samuel, 23:1–5; 1 Kings, 20:13–15), seems to be the most applicable title as far as the prose story in the Book of Judges, Chapter 4, is concerned. Perhaps the same can be said of the poetry in Chapter 5, though some have thought to find a closer parallel in a feature of Near Eastern nomadic tribal society verified only in later times: the “battle maiden,” who with song and dance stimulated and goaded on the fighting men. In any case, “prophetess” is probably a flexible enough term in Jewish literature to include this function as well. It should be noted that whatever the determination of Deborah's character and despite the attribution of the Book of Judges, Chapter 5, to her of “the song of Deborah,” it is Jael rather than Deborah whom the author of the Book of Judges regards as the “most blessed of women” in this episode (Judges, 5:24).

It has generally been assumed that the prose of the Book of Judges, Chapter 4, is a more recent retelling of the story of the poetry of Chapter 5, the latter being frequently described as one of the most ancient compositions preserved in the Old Testament. This consensus has been challenged, however. While the prose envisages Deborah, the wife of Lappidoth, an Ephraimite, enlisting the services of a Naphtalite chieftain, Barak, to lead a coalition of Ephraimites, Naphtalites, and Zebulunites against Jabin of Hazor and his general Sisera — a limited engagement which, in any case, is finally resolved only by the action of the woman Jael — the poetry celebrates a much more heroic exploit involving many more tribes, many more details, and much more drama, typical of later elaboration. There is, at all events, agreement enough between the two sources, once each is read without editorial embellishments, to conclude that together they testify to a crucial victory of Israelis over indigenous Canaanites in the time of the conquest or settlement of the Promised Land. A victory in the strategic Valley of Jezreel “at Taanach, by the waters of Megiddo” (Judges, 5:19) would have obliterated a Canaanite obstacle to the union of northern and central Israeli tribal units and contributed significantly to the eventual Israeli domination.

Samuel (11th century BCE) – Hebrew name, possibly meaning the *name of God*; in the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament, he was the last of the Judges and first of the prophets. An Ephraimite who was dedicated to the priesthood as a child by a Nazirite vow, he was begotten by Elkanah and his wife Hannah. After the defeat of Israel and loss of the Ark of the Covenant to the Philistines, Samuel tried to keep the tribal confederation together, moving in a circuit among Israel's shrines. He presided, apparently reluctantly, over Saul's election as the first king of Israel, but later criticized Saul for assuming priestly prerogatives and disobeying the divine instructions given to him. Samuel finally anointed David (☩) as Saul's successor, rather than Saul's own son, Jonathan.

182 **Nathan** (11th–10th centuries BCE) – Hebrew prophet. He announced to David (ﷺ) that his royal house would remain perpetually established but also prevented him from building a permanent temple in Jerusalem. According to Jewish history, as a protagonist of moral values, he charged David with responsibility for the death of Uriah the Hittite. Later, he was prominent in securing the succession for Solomon. Nathan wrote a chronicle of David's reign (1 Chronicles, 29:29), which was probably one of the main sources for the Books of Samuel.

Ahijah the Shilonite (that is, of **Shiloh**) – Hebrew prophet during and after the reign of Solomon; he foretold that Jeroboam would become king of Israel and later forecast his downfall (1 Kings, 11:29–40).

183 **Elijah** (9th century BCE) – Hebrew prophet whose activities are portrayed in four stories in the Book of 1 Kings (Chapters 17–19 and 21), and the Book of 2 Kings (Chapters 1 and 2). He was prominent in opposing the worship of Baal in Israel under King Ahab and Jezebel, and by virtue of his loyalty to God was depicted as ascending directly into heaven.

Elisha (second half of 9th century BCE) – Hebrew prophet in succession to Elijah; his activities are portrayed in the Book of 1 Kings, Chapter 19, and the Book of 2 Kings, Chapters 2–9 and 13. He was active in Israel under several kings from Ahab to Jehoash whom he counselled, was credited with miraculous signs, and attempted to guide the nation against her external enemies, especially the Syrians.

184 **Amos** (8th century BCE) – Hebrew prophet. Of Judean origin (a herdsman and sycamore pruner from Tekoa near Bethlehem), his main center of activity was in the northern kingdom. Although Israel was enjoying a period of prosperity under Jeroboam II, Amos sensed that the calm was temporary and that grave danger threatened from Assyria. Moreover, he was acutely conscious of the internal corruption of the kingdom arising from the sharp antagonism between the wealthy upper classes and the exploited masses. Amos prophesied at Bethel, the royal sanctuary, not encountering opposition until he foretold the destruction of the land of Ephraim, its shrines, and its royal house. Amaziah, the priest of Bethel, regarded this as treason and ordered Amos to return to Judah, but the prophet insisted on fulfilling his divine mission. Nothing further is known of his life. The Book of Amos, the third of the Twelve Minor Prophets, consists of nine chapters, the central theme being the conception of social morality as a historical and determining factor in the life of Israel and other peoples. The book is couched in a simple style with a wealth of imagery drawn from nature and from peasant life.

185 **Bava** – Aramaic for *gate*, it is used to denote a section of a book. The first tractate of the Mishnah order of Nezikin was later divided into three sections, each of ten chapters and all with commentary in the Babylonian and Palestinian Talmud. They are:

1. **Bava Kamma** (*first part*) – discusses damage caused by property or agents (for example, an ox, pit, cattle-grazing, or fire), or by a man himself (theft, assault, robbery);
2. **Bava Metzia** (*middle part*) – deals with the laws of chattels, lost and found property, the four types of caretakers (unpaid, paid, the hirer, and the borrower), embezzlement, fraud, interest, rights of hired laborers, etc.; and
3. **Bava Batra** (*last part*) – deals with laws concerning real estate, inheritance, partnerships, usucapion, procedure for drawing up legal documents, etc.

186 According to Jewish tradition, the Messianic Era will be one of global peace and harmony, an era free of strife and hardship, and one conducive to the furthering of the knowledge of the Creator. The theme of the Jewish Messiah ushering in an era of global peace is encapsulated in two of the most famous scriptural passages from the Book of Isaiah,

They shall beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks; nation will not lift sword against nation and they will no longer study warfare (Isaiah, 2:4).

The wolf will live with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the goat, the calf and the lion and the yearling together; and a little child will lead them. The cow will feed with the bear, their young will lie down together, and the lion will eat straw like the ox. The infant will play near the hole of the cobra, and the young child put his hand into the viper's nest. They will neither harm nor destroy on all my holy mountain, for the earth will be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea (Isaiah, 11:6–9).

Before the Messianic Age:

In the Sotah Tractate of the Mishnah, which deals with a woman suspected of adultery and other rituals of speech, the rabbis have said,

In the footsteps of the Messiah, arrogance (*chutzpah*) will increase; prices will rise; grapes will be abundant but wine will be costly; the government will turn into heresy; and there will be no reproach. The meeting place (of scholars) will become a bordello; the Galilee will be destroyed; the highland will lie desolate; the border people will wander from city to city and none will show them compassion;

the wisdom of authors will stink; sin-fearing people will be detested; truth will be missing; young men will humiliate the elderly; the elderly will stand while the young sit; sons will revile their fathers; daughters will strike their mothers, brides will strike their mothers-in-law; and a man's enemies will take over his house. The face of the generation is like the face of a dog! Sons have no shame in front of their fathers; and on whom can one depend? Only upon our father in heaven (Mishnah, Sotah 9:15).

This era will be characterized by God's war against Gog and Magog and other catastrophic events. Another statement, which may date from the time of the Hadrianic persecutions (132–135CE), offers the dark assessment that the Messiah will arrive in a period when Jews collaborate with their enemies, Torah learning disappears, poverty increases, and religious despair deepens,

The son of David will not arrive until informers are everywhere. Another view: Until there are few students left. Another view: Until the last coin is gone from the pocket. Another view: Until people despair of redemption...as if there is no support or help for Israel (Babylonian Talmud: Sanhedrin 97a).

Some sages predicted that the Messiah would not arrive until Israel observed the commandments more fully,

Rabbi Judah said in the name of Rav, "If all Israel had observed the very first Sabbath, no nation or tongue would have ever ruled over her..." Rabbi Yohanan said, following Rabbi Simeon bar Yohai, "Were Israel to observe two Sabbaths punctiliously, they would be redeemed immediately" (Babylonian Talmud: Shabbat 118b).

Some rabbis believed that the arrival of the Messiah had no relation either to political and societal events or to individual actions. They believed that there were a finite number of souls destined to enter the world and reside within human bodies, and that when the supply of fresh souls was exhausted, the Messiah would arrive (Babylonian Talmud: Yevamot 62a, Avodah Zarah 5a, Niddah 13b).

During the Messianic Age:

Foreign nations would not be obliterated in the Messianic Era. Nations such as Rome would come to the Messiah to pay tribute to him, but their appeals for favor would be rejected (Babylonian Talmud: Pesachim 118b).



Some rabbis will face the Messianic Age with anticipation, others with dread. One viewpoint suggests that knowledge of Torah would continue to

decline in the Messianic Age, “A bad announcement was conveyed to Israel at that moment. In the future, the Torah will be forgotten (Mekilta de-Rabbi Ishmael, Pischa 12).” Others forecast that in “the future era, the synagogues and academies of Babylonia will be transported to the Land of Israel (Babylonian Talmud: Megillah 29a).”

Still others hold that humans would take on a new appearance, some thinking that man would achieve a height of 160 feet, while another suggesting he might double that. There is no suggestion that the Messiah himself will be a wonder worker, but many sages believe that the Messianic Age would be a time of wonders: women would give birth painlessly, hens would lay eggs continuously, and food would appear in abundance (Babylonian Talmud: Shabbat 30b).

There have been controversies about the nature of the Messianic Era. Followers of the sage Samuel maintained that it would be similar to their own era, except that the Jewish people would be returned to Israel and the Davidic monarchy restored. Samuel saw “...no difference between this world and the Messianic Age other than subjugation to dispersions (Babylonian Talmud: Shabbat 63a).” Others, such as Rabbi Eliezer, believed that the next era would be unprecedented and qualitatively different. This debate represented the two poles of Jewish belief about the Messianic Era. One view sees it in terms of normal human existence under conditions of Jewish political independence; the other as something wholly new that defies prediction.

During the Messianic Era, the Messiah will reign victorious and rebuild the Temple. He will restore the priesthood to the Temple, and the traditional sacrifices will be reinstated. The return to the golden age of the Jewish people will be complete. Many popular Jewish prayers express this messianic longing for the rebuilding of the Temple and above all for the return to Zion. Perhaps even more than the coming of the Messiah, traditional Judaism has sought this dream of the return to Zion.

187 Book of Joshua – a book of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament named after its main hero, Joshua (originally Hoshea, but renamed by Moses – ). It continues the stories of the Pentateuch, beginning with the death of Moses () and presents narratives of how Israel under the leadership of Joshua conquered the land west of the Jordan River from the Canaanites after 40 years of wandering in the desert. It ends with the death of Joshua after the conquest and the apportionment of the land among the tribes of Israel. The author is anonymous, and the present form of the work seems to be composed of several distinct strands of tradition.

Books of Samuel – two books of the Old Testament, which were one in the Hebrew Bible and probably were also once combined with the Books of Kings (also called 1 and 2 Kings, in some Catholic versions). They present

a narrative of Israel's history from the time of the prophet Samuel and Israel's first king Saul to the story of David's (ﷺ) accession and reign (1 Samuel). They are probably a compilation from several, partially-overlapping sources, with a late editing after the Exile.

Books of Kings – a pair of books of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament consisting of a compilation of stories about the kings and prophets of Judah and Israel from the enthronement of Solomon to the fall of the kingdom of Israel in 721BCE, and the final collapse of Judah and Jerusalem in 587–586BCE. It is part of the Deuteronomistic history, probably once connected to the books of Samuel, and in some Catholic versions entitled 3 and 4 Kings. It is strongly critical of idolatry, apostasy, and religious fragmentation away from the Jerusalem Temple.

188 **Isaiah** (8th century BC) – in Hebrew, the name is Jeshaiiah; the first in order of the major Old Testament prophets, son of Amoz. A citizen of Jerusalem, he began his prophethood in 747BCE and exercised his office until at least the close of the century. According to tradition, he was martyred.

Jeremiah (7th–6th century BCE) – Old Testament Hebrew prophet, whose ministry continued from 626–586BCE. He was imprisoned during Nebuchadnezzar's siege of Jerusalem on suspicion of intending to desert to the enemy. On the city's fall, he retired to Egypt.

Ezekiel (lived around 600BCE) – Old Testament Hebrew prophet, who was carried into captivity in Babylon by Nebuchadnezzar (597BCE). He preached that Jerusalem's fall was due to the sins of Israel. The book of Ezekiel begins with a description of a vision of supernatural beings.

Minor Prophets – the twelve prophetic books (Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi) placed in the Hebrew Bible after the Book of Ezekiel. Their dates range between the 8th and the 5th centuries BCE. The designation "minor prophets" can also refer to the 12 traditional authors of these works.

189 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Volume 6, p. 323.

190 **Shechem** – an old Canaanite city near Mt. Gerizim that became a significant regional, Israeli religious and political center. Currently it is thought that the name, meaning *shoulder*, relates to the city's location, near both Mt. Ebal and Mt. Gerizim (Deuteronomy, 27–28). The name was previously associated with a certain man named Shechem, identified as the son of Hamor (Genesis, 33:18–19); also it appears in Egyptian texts as early as the

19th century BCE. *Sychar* in the Gospel of John (4:5) is thought to be a later name of the Old Testament Shechem. Excavations have discovered Shechem to be Tall Balāṭāḥ, about 1.5 miles east of the pass between Mts. Gerizim and Ebal and near “Jacob’s well,” which is east of the Tell.

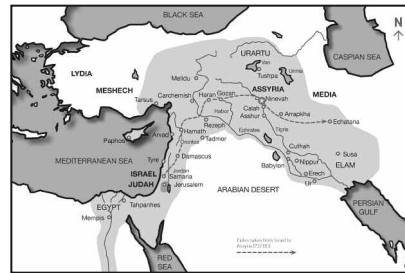
Shechem, according to excavators, was occupied from about 4000BCE and reached the height of its prosperity in the patriarchal age. It declined in the times of the Hebrew conquest but was rebuilt in the Hellenistic era and was occupied from then until about 100BCE. Abundantly supplied with water and located in a fertile plain, where major north-south and east-west highways met, Shechem was, at various times, a wealthy and powerful city, walled and conquerable only through ambush (Judges, 9:34–35). Abraham and Jacob (ﷺ) were at Shechem (Genesis, 12:6–7; 33:18–20). Dinah, daughter of Jacob (ﷺ), was raped there (Genesis, 34:1–24). Joseph (ﷺ) visited his brothers there (Genesis, 37:12–24), and later his bones were buried there (Joshua, 24:32). Shechem flourished throughout the history of the northern kingdom but suffered under the Assyrians (724–722BCE). From about 325–107BCE, the Samaritan period, Shechem regained its status as a city related to the Samaritan temple, which was built on Mt. Gerizim. Shechem suffered its death blow under John Hyrcanus in 107BCE (refer to the second graphic of Endnote 193).

191 Narrated by Abū Hurayrah and recorded by al-Bukhārī and Muslim.

إِذَا مَثَلِي وَمَثَلُ النَّبِيِّ كَمَثَلِ رَجُلٍ اسْتَوْقَدَ نَارًا، فَلَمَّا أَضَاءَتْ مَا حَوْلَهُ جَعَلَ الْفَرَاشُ وَهَذِهِ الدَّوَابُّ الَّتِي تَقَعُ فِي النَّارِ يَقَعْنَ فِيهَا، فَجَعَلَ يَنْزِعُهُنَّ وَيَغْلِبْنَهُ فَيَقْتَحِمْنَ فِيهَا، فَأَنَا أَخَذْتُ بِحُجْرَتِكُمْ عَنِ النَّارِ، وَأَنْتُمْ تُفْحِمُونَ فِيهَا.

192 **Apis** – the Egyptian bull-god, representing or incarnating the Ptah of Memphis. An actual bull was selected from a herd, black with a triangular white patch on the forehead, and kept at Memphis; after death it was mummified and placed in a special necropolis, the Serapeum.

193 **Assyria** – the name given first to the small area around the town of Assur on the Tigris in Upper Mesopotamia, and then much later to the vast empire that rulers of Assur acquired through conquering their neighbors on all sides. At its height in the 9th and 8th centuries BCE, the Assyrian Empire stretched from the eastern



Mediterranean to Persia, and from the Persian Gulf as far north as the mountains of east Turkey. The empire was destroyed in an uprising of Medes and Babylonians in 612BCE (the graphic illustrates the empire circa 700BCE).

Kingdom of Judah – an ancient Jewish state that incorporated the tribal areas of Judah and Benjamin, established when the united monarchy split into the kingdoms of Judah (in the south) and Israel (in the north) in the late-10th century BCE after the reign of Solomon (ﷺ). Each kingdom had separate kings, with Jerusalem being in the Kingdom of Judah. Both Judah and Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians in 587BCE (the graphic illustrates a map of the region in the 9th century BCE).



194 **Ezra (the Scribe)** – one of two leaders of the return from the Babylonian captivity in the 5th century BCE. He was a teacher of the Law and, presumably, author of the Book of Ezra in the Bible. Around 458BCE, 60 years after the Return and the rebuilding of the Temple, the social and religious condition of Judea deteriorated, causing great concern among Babylonian Jewry. Ezra, a priest and learned scribe, or *sofer*, led a mission of Babylonian Jewish notables to Judea to correct this condition. He carried an authorization from King Artaxerxes to appoint officials and act as an administrator. Ezra acted vigorously; he instituted religious reforms that preserved the identity and continuity of the Jewish people. By his act, the scribes took over the responsibility of teaching the people. Ezra called an assembly of the people in the Temple courts where portions of the Torah were read out loud to them. The Levites circulated among the people explaining the text, and the people pledged obedience. This was the First Great Assembly, an institution that continued for about two centuries. Not the least of Ezra's achievements was the custom he began of reading portions from the Torah on Sabbaths, Mondays, and Thursdays. This was a form of worship and teaching that spread from the Temple to synagogues all over the land. It is no wonder that, in the Talmud, Ezra has been compared to Moses (ﷺ).

Cyrus II (died 529BCE) – son of Cambyses I, often described as Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Achaemenid Persian Empire. He defeated the Medes (539BCE), became king of Persia (548BCE), and took Lydia (546BCE) and Babylon (539BCE). His empire eventually ran from the Mediterranean to the Hindu Kush. He instituted a policy of religious conciliation: the nations that had been carried into captivity in Babylon along with the Jews were restored to their native countries, and allowed to take their gods with them.



Nehemiah – Hebrew governor of Judea under Persian rule. He rebuilt Jerusalem's walls (444BCE) and initiated religious and social reforms.

195 **Book of Esther** – a book of the Hebrew Bible/Old Testament telling the popular story of how Esther, a cousin and foster daughter of the Jew, Mordecai, became the wife of the Persian king Ahasuerus (Xerxes I) and prevented the extermination of Jews by the order of Haman, a king's officer. The event is said to be the source of the Jewish feast of Purim. The **Additions to the Book of Esther** are several enhancements found in the Septuagint (pre-Christian Greek version of the Old Testament) but not in the Hebrew Bible. They are part of the Old Testament Apocrypha (14 Books of the Old Testament included in the Vulgate, which is the Latin version of the Bible used by the Roman Catholics), and appear as the Book of Esther, Chapters 11–16, in the Catholic Bible. These chapters consist of Mordecai's dream and its interpretation, the prayers of Mordecai and Esther, and edicts issued by the king. They may supply a specifically religious perspective that the Book of Esther lacks.

196 **Elephantine Papyri** – written materials in Aramaic that were discovered on the Egyptian-Ethiopian frontier on the Nile opposite Aswan in the early-20th century.

197 **Cyrene** – the capital at that time of the area known roughly as Libya today.

198 **Simon bar Kokhba** (or **bar Kosiba**, died 135CE) – leader of the Jews in their great but fruitless insurrection against the Emperor Hadrian (130–135CE). He was killed at Bethar. Some archeologists claim that some of his letters were found in caves near the Dead Sea.

199 **Rhineland** – former province of Prussia, ceded in 1815. Its unchallenged annexation by Nazi Germany (1936) was a harbinger of World War II.

200 **Jean Juster** (1886–1914) – historian who was Romanian by birth and studied in France. His great work on the juridical condition of the Jews in the Roman Empire, *Les juifs dans l'empire romain: leur condition juridique, économique et sociale* (*The Jews in the Roman Empire: their Legal Status, Economic and Social*, 2 volumes, 1914), which was cut short by his death in action in World War I, showed a potential for an in-depth Jewish perspective on the subject.

Salo Wittmayer Baron (1895–1989) – Jewish historian. Born in Galicia and educated in Vienna, Baron went to the US in 1926 to lecture at the Jewish Institute of Religion, New York. In 1930, he was appointed professor of Jew-

ish history, literature, and institutions at Columbia University. Until 1967 he was head of the American Academy for Jewish Research. He founded and edited the quarterly *Jewish Social Studies*. Acclaimed by his people as a scholar, Baron brought to his historical work a vast Jewish and secular learnedness, an unusual linguistic range, and a mastery of the social sciences. His works include *A Social and Religious History of the Jews* (18 volumes), *Modern Nationalism and Religion*, and *The Jewish Community*.



201 **golah** – Hebrew for *exile*; the term applied to the collectivity of the Jewish people outside Palestine (originally to those of Babylonia).

202 **Celts** – different groups of prehistoric peoples who all spoke Celtic languages and lived in most parts of Europe from the Balkan regions to Ireland. Most powerful during the 4th century BCE, they probably originated in present-day France, south Germany, and adjacent territories during the Bronze Age (3200–600BCE). Celtic-speaking societies developed in the later first millennium BCE, expanding through armed raids into the Iberian Peninsula, British Isles, central Europe, Italy, Greece, Anatolia, Egypt, Bulgaria, Romania, Thrace, and Macedonia. They were finally repulsed by the Romans and Germanic tribes, and in Europe withdrew into Gaul in the 1st century BCE. Celtic tradition survived most and for the longest time in Ireland and Britain. They were famous for their burial sites and hill forts, and for their bronze and iron art and jewellery.

203 **Antioch** – in Turkish, it is called Antakya; in ancient times, it was known as Hatay of Antiochia. Currently, it is the capital of the Turkish Republic's Hatay province, south Turkey; it is situated near the Mediterranean, about 90km (56 miles) west of Aleppo, Syria. It was founded in 300BCE and became a center of early Christianity, but it was destroyed by an earthquake in 526CE. Today it is renowned for its olives, cotton, grain, tobacco, and archaeological museum.

204 **Constantine I** (274–337CE) – known as Constantine the Great, or in full, as Flavius Valerius Constantinus; Roman emperor, the eldest son of Constantius Chlorus. Though proclaimed emperor by the army at York on his father's death in 306CE, it was not until his defeat of Maxentius at the Milvian Bridge in Rome (312CE) that he became Emperor of the West; and only with his victory over Licinius, the Emperor of the East, that he became sole emperor. Believing that his victory in 312CE was the work of the



Christian God, he became the first emperor to promote his understanding of Christianity, hence his title “the Great.” His Edict of Milan (313CE), issued jointly with Licinius, brought acceptance of Christians throughout the empire, and his new capital at Constantinople, founded on the strategically important site of Byzantium (324CE), was from the outset a city of Christians.

205 **Passover** – an annual Jewish festival, occurring in March or April (15–22 Nisan), commemorating the exodus of the Israelis from Egypt; also called Pesach in Judaism. It recalls the exodus of the Israelis from Egypt and the passing over by the Angel of Death of the Jewish houses, so that only the Egyptian firstborn sons were killed, redressing Pharaoh’s murdering of all Jewish male infants.

206 **sacrament** – a Christian rite understood as an outward and visible sign of an internal and spiritual grace. Orthodox and Roman Catholic Churches recognize seven sacraments: baptism, confirmation, the Eucharist (Mass), penance, extreme unction, holy orders (ordination), and matrimony. Protestant Churches recognize only baptism and the Eucharist (Communion) as sacraments.

Eucharist – *Eucharistia* in Greek, meaning *thanksgiving*. For most Christian denominations, it is a sacrament and the central act of worship, sometimes called the Mass (Roman Catholicism), Holy Communion, or Lord’s Supper (Protestantism). It generally consists of the consecration of bread and wine by the priest or minister and distribution among the worshipers (communion). It is based, according to their own writing of history, on the example of Jesus (ﷺ) at the Last Supper, when he identified bread, which he broke, and “wine,” which he poured, with his body and blood. They justify this practice by referring it to inaccurate scripture (1 Corinthians, 11:23–25; Matthew, 26:26–28; Mark, 14:22–24; Luke, 22:17–20). Theological interpretations vary from the literal transformation of the elements into the body and blood of Christ, re-enacting his sacrifice on the Cross, through different interpretations such as transubstantiation and consubstantiation, to symbolism representing the real presence of Jesus (ﷺ) and a simple memorial meal.

207 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fī Zilāl al-Qur’ān, Volume 2*. (Beirut, Lebanon: Dār al-Shurūq, 1405AH), 11th ed., p. 871.

208 **Imam al-Ḥasan ibn ‘Alī** (3–50AH) – Prophet Muhammad’s (ﷺ) grandson, oldest son of Imam ‘Alī and al-Sayyidah Fāṭimah, the fifth *khalīfah*, and the second Imam. To avert an ongoing Islamic civil war with Mu‘awiyah ibn Abī Sufyān, he yielded the political leadership of *khalīfah* to his nationalistic (*aṣabi*) rival, who subverted the office into a hereditary monarchy. After that,

many Muslims in opposition to autocratic rule were debased and persecuted. Official “state policies” vilified Imam ‘Alī. The relationship of Islamic governance and Islamic opposition has never been normal since then.

209 **Cain** – mentioned in the Bible as the eldest son of Adam and Eve (قَيْن), the brother of Abel and Seth. He is portrayed as a farmer whose offering to God was rejected, in contrast to that of his herdsman brother Abel (Genesis, 4). This led to his murdering Abel, and his punishment of being banished to a nomadic life.

Abel – the brother of Cain, and second son of Adam and Eve (قَيْن). He is described in biblical sources as a shepherd, whose offering God accepted, but he was then murdered by his brother, Cain (Genesis, 4:2–16).

210 **Nazirite** – *Nazir* in Hebrew; religious devotee who vowed not to drink any intoxicating liquor, not to have his hair cut, and not to be ritually unclean through proximity to corpses (Numbers, 6:2). Special sacrifices were stipulated in cases of pollution and on concluding the period of naziriteship. The undertaking was generally for a limited period (not less than 30 days) but could also be for life. Parents could dedicate their children as Nazirites before birth. The nazirite vow was common in ancient times and during the Second Temple Period after which — with rare exceptions — it disappeared.

211 **Shiloh** – the site of an ancient city in central Palestine; noted as the sanctuary of the tribes of Israel during the conquest and settlement of Palestine at one time. It also sheltered the Ark of the Covenant, and was thus a strong unifying force amongst the tribes. After it was destroyed in 1050BCE when the Ark was captured by the Philistines, the priesthood then moved to Nob.

212 **Malachi** (4th century BCE) – an Israeli prophet, identified by some Israeli scholars with Ezra. Many modern scholars of the Jewish faith also hold the view that Malachi is not a proper name. This prophet protested against transgressions in matters of sacrifice and tithes, and implored the priest to turn the multitude from sin and himself maintain a high level of morality. Malachi also complained of mixed and broken marriages. His eschatology contains an important and influential innovation, concerning the vision of the “Day of the Lord” preceded by the advent of Elijah.

213 This interpretation would be valid if the words “two sons of Adam: *ibnā Ādam*” are understood to mean his immediate biological (family unit) sons, and not his distant posterity descendants. This type of interpretation within the views of traditional Islamic scholars agrees with the version in the Bible about Cain and Abel being the immediate children of Adam (قَيْن). Recall,

however, that Imam al-Ḥasan's view was that the "two sons of Adam" refers to Adam's (ﷺ) posterity in the Children of Israel.

214 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 6, p. 153–54 (originally narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn 'Abbās, Ibn 'Umar, and others).

215 Recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and others.

إذا التقى المسلمان بسبيقتيهما فالقاتل والمقتول في النار. قلت: يا رسول الله. هذا القاتل. فما بال المقتول؟ قال: إنه كان حريصاً على قتل صاحبه.

216 Dr. Wahbah al-Zuhaylī, *Al-Tafsīr al-Munīr*, Volume 6, p. 155.

217 Narrated by 'Abdullāh ibn Mas'ūd and recorded by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal. Abū Dāwūd recorded it via al-A'mash.

لا تُقتل نفس ظلمًا، إلا كان على ابن آدم الأول كِفْلٌ من دميها. لأنه أول من سنَّ القتل.

218 **raven** – large black bird with a straight bill and long wedge-shaped tail; one of several larger-bodied members of the genus *Corvus*. They share similar characteristics and appearances that generally separate them from crows, with which they are often confused. A raven is about three times larger than a common crow.



The largest raven species are the common raven and the thick-billed raven.

219 **Universal Declaration of Human Rights** (1948) – declaration adopted by the United Nations General Assembly at the Palais de Chaillot, Paris. The Declaration arose directly from the experience of World War II and represents a global expression of rights to which all human beings are inherently entitled. Today the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) is part of the International Bill of Rights, which also includes the International Covenant on Economic, Social, and Cultural Rights, and the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its two Optional Protocols. The full text of UDHR, with all of its 30 articles, is given below.

Preamble

Whereas recognition of the inherent dignity and of the equal and inalienable rights of all members of the human family is the foundation of freedom, justice, and peace in the world,

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,

Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,

Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,

Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,

Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,

Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,

Now, Therefore THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY proclaims THIS UNIVERSAL DECLARATION OF HUMAN RIGHTS as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.

Article 1. All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.

Article 2. Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, color, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional, or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing, or under any other limitation of sovereignty.

Article 3. Everyone has the right to life, liberty, and security of person.

Article 4. No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.

Article 5. No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman, or degrading treatment or punishment.

Article 6. Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.

Article 7. All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.

Article 8. Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.

Article 9. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention, or exile.

Article 10. Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.

Article 11. (1) Everyone charged with a penal offense has the right to be presumed innocent until proved guilty according to law in a public trial at which he has had all the guarantees necessary for his defense. (2) No one shall be held guilty of any penal offense on account of any act or omission which did not constitute a penal offense, under national or international law, at the time when it was committed. Nor shall a heavier penalty be imposed than the one that was applicable at the time the penal offense was committed.

Article 12. No one shall be subjected to arbitrary interference with his privacy, family, home, or correspondence, nor to attacks upon his honor and reputation. Everyone has the right to the protection of the law against such interference or attacks.

Article 13. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of movement and residence within the borders of each state. (2) Everyone has the right to leave any country, including his own, and to return to his country.

Article 14. (1) Everyone has the right to seek and to enjoy in other countries asylum from persecution. (2) This right may not be invoked in the case of prosecutions genuinely arising from non-political crimes or from acts contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 15. (1) Everyone has the right to a nationality. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his nationality nor denied the right to change his nationality.

Article 16. (1) Men and women of full age, without any limitation due to race, nationality, or religion, have the right to marry and to found a family. They are entitled to equal rights as to marriage, during marriage, and at its dissolution. (2) Marriage shall be entered into only with the free and full consent of the intending spouses. (3) The family is the natural and fundamental group unit of society and is entitled to protection by society and the State.

Article 17. (1) Everyone has the right to own property alone as well as in association with others. (2) No one shall be arbitrarily deprived of his property.

Article 18. Everyone has the right to freedom of thought, conscience, and religion; this right includes freedom to change his religion or belief, and freedom, either alone or in community with others and in public or private, to manifest his religion or belief in teaching, practice, worship and observance.

Article 19. Everyone has the right to freedom of opinion and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive, and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Article 20. (1) Everyone has the right to freedom of peaceful assembly and association. (2) No one may be compelled to belong to an association.

Article 21. (1) Everyone has the right to take part in the government of his country, directly or through freely chosen representatives. (2) Everyone has the right of equal access to public service in his country. (3) The will of the people shall be the basis of the authority of government; this will shall be expressed in periodic and genuine elections which shall be by universal and equal suffrage and shall be held by secret vote or by equivalent free voting procedures.

Article 22. Everyone, as a member of society, has the right to social security and is entitled to realization, through national effort and international cooperation and in accordance with the organization and resources of each

State, of the economic, social, and cultural rights indispensable for his dignity and the free development of his personality.

Article 23. (1) Everyone has the right to work, to free choice of employment, to just and favorable conditions of work, and to protection against unemployment. (2) Everyone, without any discrimination, has the right to equal pay for equal work. (3) Everyone who works has the right to just and favorable remuneration ensuring for himself and his family an existence worthy of human dignity, and supplemented, if necessary, by other means of social protection. (4) Everyone has the right to form and to join trade unions for the protection of his interests.

Article 24. Everyone has the right to rest and leisure, including reasonable limitation of working hours and periodic holidays with pay.

Article 25. (1) Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing, and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age, or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control. (2) Motherhood and childhood are entitled to special care and assistance. All children, whether born in or out of wedlock, shall enjoy the same social protection.

Article 26. (1) Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages. Elementary education shall be compulsory. Technical and professional education shall be made generally available and higher education shall be equally accessible to all on the basis of merit. (2) Education shall be directed to the full development of the human personality and to the strengthening of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms. It shall promote understanding, tolerance, and friendship among all nations, racial or religious groups, and shall further the activities of the United Nations for the maintenance of peace. (3) Parents have a prior right to choose the kind of education that shall be given to their children.

Article 27. (1) Everyone has the right freely to participate in the cultural life of the community, to enjoy the arts, and to share in scientific advancement and its benefits. (2) Everyone has the right to the protection of the moral and material interests resulting from any scientific, literary, or artistic production of which he is the author.

Article 28. Everyone is entitled to a social and international order in which the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration can be fully realized.

Article 29. (1) Everyone has duties to the community in which alone the free and full development of his personality is possible. (2) In the exercise of his rights and freedoms, everyone shall be subject only to such limitations as are determined by law solely for the purpose of securing due recognition and respect for the rights and freedoms of others and of meeting the just requirements of morality, public order, and the general welfare in a democratic society. (3) These rights and freedoms may in no case be exercised contrary to the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

Article 30. Nothing in this Declaration may be interpreted as implying for any State, group, or person any right to engage in any activity or to perform any act aimed at the destruction of any of the rights and freedoms set forth herein (source: <http://www.un.org/en/documents/udhr/>).

220 In the narrative the Prophet (ﷺ) is reported to have said to them pertaining to this livestock, “*Drink its urine and milk.*” This is the type of sentence that forces an evaluation of the authenticity of the hadith, or the authenticity of this type of sentence. Firstly, any medicinal value pertaining to ingesting edible animals’ urine should be discussed. And if such value is conclusively apparent, then the validity of the hadith can be accepted; however if such value is questionable or nonexistent, then either this sentence should be discarded from the hadith or the entire hadith rejected altogether. Obviously, not all hadiths fall into this category; the ones that do have to be approached in the manner outlined here.

221 According to one narrative, “Their eyes were ironed with hot nails, their hands were cut off, and they were left in that al-Ḥarraḥ area to die.”^a In al-Bukhārī’s narration, Qatādaḥ, who quotes Anas ibn Mālīk, says, “After that we were told that the Prophet (ﷺ) motivated the people to be generous in their *ṣadaqah* [charity] and prohibited mutilation!”^b This whole narrative is cited here to express how some quotes that are attributed to the Prophet (ﷺ) become problematic.

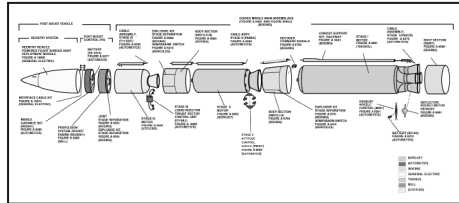
a Narrated by Anas ibn Mālīk and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, Muslim, and others.

b In the narratives of al-Bukhārī, Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, and Abū Dāwūd, Qatādaḥ says Ibn Sirīn reported that all this was before the *ḥudūd* (revealed scriptural punishments) were sent down by Allah (ﷻ).

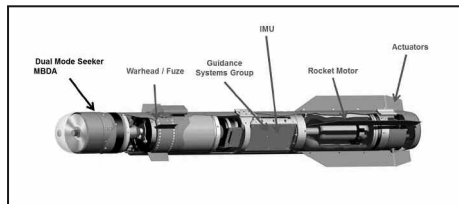
222 **Khawārij** – refer to pp. 356–57 and **Endnote 474** in Volume 8.

223 **multiple independently targetable reentry vehicle (MIRV)** – a nuclear-armed warhead, numbers of which may be incorporated in the front end of a large ballistic missile to be dispensed over a target area. A “MIRVed” missile may therefore make attacks on several targets at once.

ballistic missile – a missile that acquires its energy during its launch phase, flying on a trajectory dictated by its initial velocity added to the factors of gravity and aerodynamic drag, until it reaches the target. A cruise missile, by contrast, flies with wings through the atmosphere under continuous power. A rifle bullet is in effect a ballistic missile, but more specifically the term applies to the big intercontinental and submarine-launched ballistic missiles that carry nuclear warheads. The missile may be propelled by a single rocket or several stages of rocket booster that fall away as the fuel they carry is expended. The missile’s “payload” is then free to fly on, arcing through space on its ballistic trajectory, before reentering the atmosphere to impact the target.



cruise missile – a type of missile that flies on wings, and is propelled continuously by an engine using air from the atmosphere as its oxidant to mix with the fuel it carries. The German V-1 (1944) was probably the first cruise missile, but the weapon came to prominence again 30 years later when it was revived by US weapons scientists to provide a comparatively cheap means of delivering a nuclear or conventional warhead over a long distance, using onboard computer power to provide pinpoint accuracy. The US armed forces have deployed a range of cruise missile systems including ground launched (GLCMs), sea-launched (SLCMs, capable of being launched from small warships and submarines), and air-launched weapons (ALCMs).



Pershing Missile – a medium-range, land-based missile with a nuclear warhead, deployed by the US Army in West Germany from 1983 onward as part of NATO’s theater nuclear force modernization program. The Pershing II supplanted the earlier Pershing I.

224 **Hiroshima and Nagasaki (1945)** – refer to **Endnote 286** in Volume 5.

225 It could be argued here that Abū Bakr went to war against such subversives and agitators, who were citizens of the Islamic State in Madinah, but who nonetheless wanted to break their financial obligations toward Allah (ﷻ) and His Prophet (ﷺ) by refusing to pay the *zakāh*; these were the so-called Ḥurūb al-Riddah (Wars of Renunciation).

226 **euthanasia** – the much-touted painless ending of life, usually as an act of “mercy” to relieve chronic pain or suffering. It has been advocated by pressure groups such as Exit (UK) and the Hemlock Society (USA), and by some physicians as a dignified death for the elderly who have lost the will or desire to live. However, no country of significance has officially sanctioned the practice yet.

227 **South Sea Bubble (1720)** – financial crisis in Britain arising out of speculation mania generated by Parliament’s approval of the South Sea Company’s proposal to take over three-fifths of the national debt. Many investors were ruined in the aftermath.

Great Depression (1929–1939) – the deepest and longest-lasting economic downturn in the history of the Western industrialized world. In the US, the Great Depression began soon after the stock market crash of 1929, which sent Wall Street (America’s finance hub in New York City) into a panic and ruined millions of investors. Over the next several years, consumer spending and investment dropped, causing steep declines in industrial output and rising levels of unemployment as failing companies laid off workers. By 1933, when the Great Depression reached its nadir, some 13–15 million Americans were unemployed and nearly half of the country’s banks had failed. Though the relief and reform measures put into place by President Franklin D. Roosevelt helped lessen the worst effects of the Great Depression in the 1930s, the economy would not fully turn around until after 1939, when America’s war footing in WWII revived its industry.

PIIGS (2008–present) – due to the economic recession that started in 2008 (the investment banking and derivatives crisis in the US and other Western European countries), several members of the European Union (EU) became historically known as PIIGS. These states included Portugal, Italy, Ireland, Greece, and Spain, which if combined together, form the acronym PIIGS. These countries were grouped together because of the substantial instability of their economies (as defined by the Bretton Woods institutions — the IMF and the World Bank), which became an evident burden on the economies of the other members of the EU in 2009.

228 Industrial Revolution – refer to **Endnote 195** in Volume 3 and Endnote 284 in Volume 7.

229 Refer to Endnote 34 in this volume.

230 Narrated by Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, al-Bukhārī, and to be found in the four other books of Sunan.

من قال حين يسمعُ النداءَ – اللهمَّ ربَّ هذه الدعوة التامة، والصلاة القائمة، آت محمداً الوسيلةَ والفضيلةَ، وابعثه مقاماً محموداً الذي وعدته – حلت له شفاعتي يومَ القيامة.

231 Muḥammad Rashīd Riḍā, *Tafsīr al-Manār*, Volume 6, p. 370 (originally narrated by Jābir ibn ‘Abdillāh, same as Endnote 230 above).

232 Narrated by ‘Abdullāh ibn ‘Umar, and recorded by Aḥmad ibn Ḥanbal, Muslim, and to be found in all the books of Sunan except for Ibn Mājah.

إذا سمعتمُ المؤذنينَ فقولوا مثل ما يقول. ثمَّ صلُّوا عليّ. فإنّه من صلّى عليّ صلاةً صلّى اللهُ عليه بها عشراً. ثمَّ سلوا اللهَ لي الوسيلةَ، فإنها منزلة في الجنة لا تنبغي إلا لعبيدٍ من عباد الله. وأرجو أن أكونَ أنا هو. فمن سأل لي الوسيلةَ حلتُّ له الشفاعةُ.

233 **‘Ām al-Ramādāh (Year of Famine or Ashes, 17AH)** – in this year, during the *khilāfah* of ‘Umar ibn al-Khaṭṭāb, severe drought followed by famine afflicted the Arabian Peninsula. Many Muslims and non-Muslims began to die because of hunger and epidemic disease. When the limited food reserves in Madinah began to run out, ‘Umar wrote to his provincial governors in al-Shām and Iraq for aid. A state of emergency was declared in Madinah in particular and all of Arabia in general. The timely aid of ‘Umar’s governors saved the lives of thousands of people throughout Arabia. The first governor to respond was Abū ‘Ubaydah ibn al-Jarrāh, the governor of al-Shām.

Later, Abū ‘Ubaydah paid a personal visit to Madinah and acted as an officer in the disaster management effort, which was personally overseen by ‘Umar himself. Once an adequate supply of rations reached Madinah, ‘Umar dispatched some of the residents of Madinah with supply caravans to famine-stricken areas in desert settlements deeper into Arabia, which in turn, saved hundreds of thousands from starvation. For internally displaced people, ‘Umar hosted a dinner every night at Madinah, which according to one estimate, had attendance of more than 100,000 people. As conditions began to improve with the coming rains, and as soon as the famine ended, ‘Umar personally supervised the rehabilitation of the displaced people. They were given adequate amounts of rations and were exempted from payment of the *zakāh* for that year and the next year.

234 Sayyid Quṭb, *Fi Zilāl al-Qur'ān*, Volume 2, p. 883.

235 **dīnār** – gold currency at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ), and for centuries thereafter. One *dīnār* equals 20 *qīrāt*, which is the equivalent of 72 *ḥabbah*, which amounts to 4.25g (of gold.) With currency fluctuations vis-à-vis gold, 4.25g of gold would be around 4.25 US dollars if the price of 1kg of gold is \$1,000. Refer also to p. 215 and **Endnote 134** in Volume 2 (the graphic shows one of the earliest Islamic coin issues; the piece was probably minted at Damascus, 77AH).



236 Paul Barry Clarke and Andrew Linzey (editors), *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*. (New York, New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 703–06.

237 Ibid.

238 Ibid.

239 Ibid.

240 **Utilitarianism** – philosophical theory of ethics outlined by the philosopher Jeremy Bentham and developed by John Stuart Mill. According to utilitarianism, an action is morally right if it has consequences that lead to happiness, and wrong if it brings about the reverse. Thus society should aim for the greatest happiness of the greatest number.

241 Paul Barry Clarke, *Dictionary of Ethics, Theology, and Society*, pp. 703–06.

242 Ibid.

243 Ibid.

244 Ibid.

Jeremy Bentham (1748–1832) – refer to **Endnote 64** in Volume 3 and **Endnote 328** in Volume 7.

245 Ibid.

246 Ibid.

247 Ibid.

Glossary

adhān – the call to *ṣalāh*.

‘ahd – a pledge; contract, treaty, agreement between parties or signatories. In scripture, the word often refers to the Covenant between Jehovah and the Children of Israel, or between Allah (ﷻ) and *al-ladhīna āmanū* (past, even before Muhammad (ﷺ), or present). The occurrence of the word in a specific context narrows or fine-tunes the general meaning.

Ahl al-Bayt – literally, the folks of the Prophet’s (ﷺ) household, in particular, Imam ‘Alī, his wife Fāṭimah al-Zahrā’, their oldest sons, al-Ḥasan, and al-Ḥusayn, and their direct descendants. Today, in practice, those who identify themselves as the devotees of Ahl al-Bayt, generally Shī‘īs, consider the pronouncements of the Imams to be an unerring representation of the Sunnah, and thereby second to the Qur’an.

Ahl al-Kitāb – Folks of the Book (also People of the Book); this expression refers to people who belong or belonged to any of a

number of holy books or scriptures that were revealed by Allah (ﷻ) to His Prophets (ﷺ) throughout the course of history. Most notably among them are “Jews” and “Christians” who still have an affinity with or a “working relationship” with the Bible — Old or New Testaments.

ahl al-shawkaḥ – *an armed or ferocious force.*

aḥzāb – *confederates, regional confederation of military forces; usually refers to the alliance of mushrik armies that surrounded Madinah during the Battle of al-Khandaq (the Trench), otherwise known as the Campaign of al-Aḥzāb.*

‘amal ṣāliḥ – *an effort of merit; this is an honorific phrase that usually refers to the actions and conduct of al-ladhīna āmanū in the Qur’anic discourse. The implication is that there is a synergy between a secure commitment to Allah (ﷻ) and the exertion of efforts of merit and rectitude.*

‘amāmah – *headdress; turban.*

āmīn – *we consent to, approve of, and are committed to what was said.*

an‘ām – *refers literally to camels, cows, and sheep. By analogy, however, it could also be extended to include buffalos, goats, deer, and any other hooved and cud-chewing mammals that are from the same biological classification.*

‘aqd – *literally, joining or tying together; binding agreement, legal transaction; plural: ‘uqūd. The occurrence of the word in a specific context narrows or fine-tunes this general meaning.*

‘aqīdah – *a set of key convictions; indoctrination. In Islamic history, responding to challenges from Christianity and Zoroastrianism, it was a largely unfinished attempt by the Mu‘tazilaḥ and other notable Islamic scholars (working individually, that is, not within*

the deliberative mechanism of a *shūrā* that such a task demands) to define the core elements of the Islamic theology.

al-Arḍ al-Muqaddasaḥ – *the Holy Land*; generally refers to an area that extends from the Sinai Peninsula to the Euphrates River, inclusive of Palestine and parts of Lebanon, Jordan, Syria, Iraq, and Egypt; more specifically, it refers to the area around Jerusalem.

arjulakum – *your feet*; one foot is called *rijl*.

‘aṣabī – *of or pertaining to ‘aṣabīyaḥ*.

‘aṣabīyaḥ – *any social expression of clan solidarity or exclusivity — ethnic, racial, national, sectarian — that presents itself with an air of supremacy or elitism, such that individual members are supported by the rest even if their actions are unjust, criminal, and oppressive.*

al-ashhur al-ḥurum – *the sacred and safe (non-combat) months of the Islamic lunar calendar: Dhū al-Qa‘daḥ, Dhū al-Ḥijjaḥ, al-Muḥarram, and Rajab.*

āyaḥ – *illustration, miracle*; this could refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) illustration through revelation, that is, the verse(s) of the generous Qur’an; it can also refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) illustration of power and authority in the course of prophetic and social history (that is, an alteration of physical laws: miracles); and lastly, it could refer to Allah’s (ﷻ) illustration of power as an act of creation. Plural for *āyaḥ* is *āyāt*.

baghy – *infringement, aggression, belligerence; animus.*

bahīmaḥ al-an‘ām – *herbivorous grazing animals (excludes wild beasts and birds).*

bahīraḥ – *a she-camel whose ear has been obviously cleaved, whose meat and milk was unlawful for women (in jāhiliyaḥ times), that has*

reproduced at least five times, and that is sequestered from being mounted for rides or loads.

Banū Isrā'īl – the Children of Israel.

al-Bayt al-Ḥarām – the Sanctified (or Restricted) House; this is the Inviolable House of Allah (ﷺ) in Makkah, which is described and should be maintained as *mathābatan li-al-nāsi wa-amnā* (a place of retreat for people and a zone of security). It is also referred to as simply the Ḥaram or al-Masjid al-Ḥarām. The perimeters of this Ḥaram extend to include most of Makkah.

Bayt al-Māl – the treasury of the Islamic state.

da'wah – call; contemporarily used, though not necessarily right, to mean missionary activity designed to convince non-Muslims of Allah's (ﷺ) message.

dhabḥ – animal slaughter according to Islamic principles and standards.

dhabīḥah – an edible animal that is slaughtered according to Islamic standards, teachings, and regulations.

Dhū al-Ḥijjah – the twelfth month of the Islamic hijrī calendar; it is also one of the four months in which *al-ladhīna āmanū* are not to initiate any fighting or hostilities.

Dhū al-Qa'dah – the eleventh month of the Islamic hijrī calendar; it is also one of the four months in which *al-ladhīna āmanū* are not to initiate any fighting or hostilities.

dīn – ideological pattern and social prototype; this word is probably one of the most mistranslated words. The usual translation of the word is *religion*. But in a better understanding of Islamic terms the word *dīn* should carry within its meaning a lively prototype and a social system. As such a *dīn* could be man-made and in denial of Allah

(ﷺ) or it may be in conformity with Allah (ﷻ) and in affirmation of Him.

dīnār – a gold coin used as currency at the time of the Prophet (ﷺ) and for many hundreds of years thereafter in the Islamic domain; a modern equivalent of an original Makkan dīnār would be approximately 4.25 grams of gold.

diyāḥ – blood money, indemnity, financial compensation for the bereaved relatives of a person who was killed or murdered.

du‘ā' – prayer or a reverent petition to Allah (ﷻ).

faḍīlah – moral excellence; virtue, merit.

fāḥishah – misconduct, vicious behavior; moral violation; plural: fawāḥish. An emphatic or exaggerated form of fāḥishah is faḥshā'.

fa-ighsilū – So then... (all of you should) wash.

faqīh – savant, academician; one who specializes, in particular, in matters that are jurisprudential.

farā'id – mandatory acts that incur a sin if they are avoided or not done; singular: farīdah.

fiqh – practical knowledge, legal knowledge, jurisprudence; the moral and legal understanding and interpretation of Islamic norms and laws within a particular generation or set of circumstances.

fiqhī – of or pertaining to fiqh.

ghusl – an Islamic bath; the intentional bathing of the Muslim body with pure water.

ḥabbaḥ – literally, a grain, granule, or seed; a weight measure roughly equivalent to 0.059g.

ḥabl – rope, cable, or cord; connection or means.

ḥadd – limit; law of punishment enforceable only by the Islamic state; plural: ḥudūd.

ḥadith – a verbal or practical precedent of the Prophet (ﷺ); the simple linguistic meaning of the word is speech.

al-Ḥadith – the full body of ḥadith literature of the Prophet (ﷺ).

ḥady(u) – the lead animal in a pack or herd of grazing livestock.

Hajj – the Pilgrimage; this is the annual meeting of the Muslims in Makkah during the last three months of the lunar year: Shawwāl, Dhū al-Qa‘daḥ, and Dhū al-Ḥijjaḥ. The mass assembly of people during this annual congregation is Yawm ‘Arafāt, which is the 9th day of Dhū al-Ḥijjaḥ — the day before ‘Īd al-Aḍḥá.

Ḥajjaḥ al-Wadā‘ – the last and only Hajj pilgrimage the Prophet (ﷺ) participated in (10AH).

ḥalāl – sanctioned, ritually fit; this word roughly corresponds to the word *kosher* in some of its biblical usage. The word extends over ritual and legal practices.

ḥām – a virile (potent) bull or stud that, after impregnating 10 cows, is not to be mounted for rides.

ḥarābaḥ – long and drawn-out scheme of opposition against a legitimate authority or government.

ḥaraj – tightness, narrowness; constriction, confinement; anguish, distress, oppression.

Ḥaram, the – *Restricted Sanctuary*; the Ḥaram in the generic sense is the Inviolable House of Allah (ﷺ) in Makkah — the **Ka'bah**.

ḥarām – *taboo, unauthorized or unlawful*; this word is the opposite of ḥalāl.

ḥarb – *war, warfare, combat*.

Ḥawwā' – *Eve*; Adam's wife (ﷺ).

al-Ḥayy al-Qayyūm – *two attributes of Allah (ﷻ) meaning the Everlasting, the Ever-Attending*.

ḥijāb – *cover, wrap, drape; screen, partition*. In general usage, it refers to the dress code according to Islamic standards.

al-Ḥijāz – *historical province of the Arabian Peninsula on the western shore of the Red Sea, the territory in which the holy cities of Makkah and Madinah are located*.

Ḥurūb al-Riddah – *Wars of Regression*; not to be confused with the typical orientalist translation, "Wars of Apostasy."

'ibādullāh – *conforming subjects of Allah (ﷻ); singular: 'abdullāh*.

ibnā Ādam – *the two sons of Adam (ﷺ), Hābil and Qābil*.

'Īd al-Aḏḥā – *the high, holy Day(s) of Sacrifice*.

iḥrām – *a state of ritual consecration*.

ijtihād – *a legal Islamic assessment or edict*; this word infers a rigorous scholarly effort to reach an informed opinion based upon the Qur'an and the Sunnah.

īmān – secure commitment, covenant; the word is virtually a distillation of *amānaḥ* (trust) and *amn* (security).

īmānī – of or pertaining to *īmān*.

intifādaḥ – literally, an outpouring, an inundation (like from a flood); burst or eruption; mass resistance and protest.

iqra' – Read! The word that commenced the revelation of the Qur'an to Prophet Muhammad (ﷺ); it is the first word of the 96th chapter, *Sūrah al-'Alaq*.

Islam – resignation/yielding; this is a relationship with Allah (ﷻ) more than it is a religion. And it defines individuals and people who acquiesce and adhere to the will of Allah (ﷻ). Like other Qur'anic words, its specific meaning is refined within the context it is in. Generally speaking, it may be understood to refer to the “civic character” or “civilian status” of people once there is a full and meaningful *taqwá*-type orderliness with associated rules.

al-istiqsām bi-al-azlām – a form of fortune telling that in ancient Arabia involved a person going to the Ka'bah and drawing one of three bladeless arrows (pointers) when he was on the verge of making an important decision; one of the arrows was inscribed with “do not,” the second with “do,” and the third with nothing. Hence, if the person drew one of the arrows with the writing, then he would follow its instruction to do or not to do, but if he drew the blank one, he would repeat the drawing until he drew one of the arrows with the definitive direction.

izār – the lower garment a male pilgrim wears while he is in the state of *iḥrām* for either Hajj or 'Umrah.

jabbār – gigantic, colossal, huge; mighty, powerful; tough, pompous, intimidating. The word *jabbārīn*, which is the plural of *jabbār*, refers to a brash, callous, unfearing, and belligerent people.

jāhidū – (All of you) strive and struggle! The command to conduct or participate in a jihad.

jāhili – pertaining to jāhiliyah (ignocracy); ignocratic.

jāhiliyah – an era of governance without God, the age of systemic lack of scriptural guidance; it may be characterized as an “ignocracy” or “idiocracy.” It not only refers to the time preceding Muhammad (ﷺ), but also any time period in which Allah’s (ﷻ) *dīn* is overrun by other systems and establishments.

jamā‘ah – aggregation/congregation; in a more exacting sense, it is the quorum of Muslims needed for a particular task or obligation.

janābah – sexual discharge.

Jazīrah al-‘Arab – the Arabian Peninsula.

jihad – the ultimate effort and sacrifice; it is not holy war. The word has a spectrum of meanings and applications that range from a struggle against the forces of evil within the self to a struggle against the forces of evil within the cosmos.

Jumu‘ah – the assembly day (the sixth day of the occidental week), Friday; the day of the week in which Muslims assemble for their weekly congregational sermon and service. In some Muslim calendars, the day of Jumu‘ah is considered to be the first day of the week.

Ka‘bah – a cubic structure, an object of veneration; the black enshrouded cube at the center of al-Masjid al-Ḥarām, originally built by Ibrāhīm and Ismā‘īl (ﷺ) and around which Muslim pilgrims perform their *ṭawāf* (circumambulation).

kaffārah al-yamīn – atonement for breaking an oath.

kāfir – one who actively resists and refuses to comply with Allah (ﷻ); every person who enlists in *kufr* becomes a *kāfir*. Plurals are *kāfirūn*, *kāfirīn*, and *kuffār*; refer to the general definition of *kufr* below.

khābā'ith – toxins, pathogens; singular: *khābithah*.

khalīfah – successor; this word has its Qur'anic context. In this context man/humans are designated as Allah's (ﷻ) successors on earth. In post-prophetic Islamic literature it refers to those who succeeded the Prophet (ﷺ) as the leader of the Muslims.

khilāfah – successorship; Caliphate.

khimār – a cover, or anything that covers. In lay language, it refers to that which covers a woman's head.

khuffayhi – his two leather shoes; feminine: *khuffayhā*.

khuffayn – a pair of leather shoes.

khutbah – sermon, speech, lecture.

kufr – denial of Allah's (ﷻ) authority and power; this becomes a “philosophy” or an “ideology.” There is a mental construct of ideas that argue against Allah (ﷻ) as Sovereign, Lawgiver, and Authority. There may be many expressions of this contrarian hypothesis and political orientation; but one thing in common among all of them — bar none — is their exclusion of Allah (ﷻ) as the Almighty and the ultimate Authority.

al-ladhīna āmanū – those who are securely committed to Allah (ﷻ); the first among equals in an Islamic society.

al-mā' al-muṭlaq – undiminished, unmitigated, unadulterated, untainted, and uncontaminated — that is, pure — water.

madhhab – an [Islamic] rational pursuit in fulfilling the meanings of the Qur'an and Sunnah; usually refers to one of the Islamic *fiqhī* schools of thought.

mafāsīd – malicious acts and scandalous deeds; corruption and corrupting institutions; singular: *mafsadah*. It refers to the social disintegration from Allah's (ﷻ) guidance and counsel that elicits the corrective justice of His social laws (*sunan*).

manna – an edible substance similar in appearance to grain and with a taste as sweet as honey.

marḥūmūn – those who receive Allah's (ﷻ) mercy; plural of *marḥūm*.

maṣāliḥ – advantages, benefits, (generic) welfare; the common good and common interest; singular: *maṣlahah*. It refers to the benefits that accrue to society, in the manner of security and peace, when it has a healthy and fruitful relationship with Allah (ﷻ).

masbaḥah – the “praiseful beads” (the 99 beads on a string that are used by Muslims to count *subḥānallāh*, *al-ḥamdu lillāh*, and *allāhu akbar*, 33 times each).

masjid – the place or area of *sujūd* (prostration); a mosque.

al-Masjid al-Aqṣā – the Distant Masjid; this is the *masjid* in al-Quds (Jerusalem), located in an area called al-Ḥaram al-Sharīf (the Honorable Sanctuary). This is the area from which the Prophet (ﷺ) ascended unto heaven in his famous night journey from Makkah to al-Quds (known formally as *al-isrā' wa-al-mi'rāj*). Thus, there are three holy sanctuaries: the first in Makkah, al-Masjid al-Ḥarām; the second in Madinah, al-Masjid al-Nabawī (the Prophet's (ﷺ) Masjid); and the third in al-Quds, al-Masjid al-Aqṣā.

Masjid al-Dīrār – a *masjid* the *munāfiqs* of Madinah built while the Prophet (ﷺ) and the combat-ready Muslims were away at the cam-

paign to Tabūk. The “*masjid*” was built as a rival to al-Masjid al-Nabawī — as a staging area for *kufr*, for creating disharmony amongst the committed Muslims, and for the strategic planning of those who had all along been at war against Allah (ﷻ) and His Messenger (ﷺ). On his way back from Tabūk, the Prophet (ﷺ) received orders to raze the offensive structure to the ground.

al-Masjid al-Ḥarām – *the Restricted Sanctuary*; see also the Ḥaram and al-Bayt al-Ḥarām.

maskh – *transformation, metamorphosis, transmutation*. In the context of the Yahūd, it refers to the expedited worldly penalty of genetic regression that resulted in some of them “lapsing” into a sub-human species.

mathābah – *a place to which one regularly returns; retreat, refuge, security zone*. In context, it refers to the Holy Sanctuary (al-Masjid al-Ḥarām) in Makkah.

maysir – *in ancient Arabia, a game of roulette involving ten pointers/indicators, seven of which were “live” (meaning that each would indicate a “win” or a “loss”), while the remaining three were neutral (indicating nothing)*. The roulette was often utilized to determine the share one would get from a slaughtered camel.

mikhlab – *claw of a carnivorous bird*.

mīthāq – *the most confidential of covenants*. The occurrence of the word in a specific context narrows or fine-tunes its general meaning.

mu’adhdhin – *a person who calls (announces) the adhān*.

mufassir – *exegetist; one who explains the meanings of the Qur’an*.

muḥārabah – *strategic and generational warfare*.

al-Muḥarram – the first month of the Islamic hijrī calendar; it is also one of the four months in which *al-ladhīna āmanū* are not to initiate any fighting or hostilities.

muḥarramāt – forbidden or unlawful things.

muḥdathīn – those who are physically stained by a minor call of nature (urination or defecation) or a major call of nature (copulation or masturbation); singular: *muḥdath*.

muḥṣanāt – women fortified by their morality from illicit sexual behavior; singular is *muḥṣanaḥ*.

mu'min – every person who is firmly and securely committed to Allah (ﷻ); a bearer of *īmān*. See *īmān* above.

munkar – that which is self-evidently objectionable and offensive.

munāfiq – a dual loyalist; those “Muslims” who are outwardly performing their part in a ritual Islam, but when it comes time to honor this Islam in its struggle and sacrifices, they show inclination toward the anti-Islamic camps, states or powers around. They feign Islam, while in reality they owe their allegiance to the representatives of *kufr*. See *nifāq* below.

mushrik – an individual(s) and people(s) who actively and institutionally diminish the authority of Allah (ﷻ) and promote the authority of others. They equate worldly powers with Allah (ﷻ) and they denigrate Allah (ﷻ) as “one among many” deities and authorities. The feminine singular is *mushrikaḥ*; feminine plural is *mushrikāt*.

muṣḥaf – a bound script or book. With a definite article, it usually refers to the Qur'an.

nāb – the long canine tooth of a carnivorous animal.

al-nabī al-ummī – the unlettered prophet or the prophet of a people who did not have a legacy of scripture; it is one of the designations for the Arab (as opposed to Hebrew) prophet, Muhammad (ﷺ).

nafaqaḥ – outlay, expenditure, disbursement; maintenance, support.

nafy – exile, banishment; expulsion, expatriation, deportation.

najāsaḥ – impurity, filth; opposite of ṭahārah.

Naṣārā – theological Christians or political Christians (defined by context).

nasī' – the pre-Islamic Arabian tradition of switching the months of the calendar; intercalation.

nikāḥ – ceremonial and contractual marriage; matrimony, wedlock.

nifāq – disloyalty, hypocrisy, feigning allegiance.

nūr – light, luminance.

qā'idūn – those who are sedentary, inactive, apathetic, and lethargic.

qalā'id – the animals in a herd or flock of grazing livestock that follow the lead animal, hady(u).

qaṭ' – cut, amputation.

qatl – killing, homicide, murder; execution, capital punishment.

qawm – people, nation, race; folks.

qiblaḥ – the accommodating and unifying center that attracts the Muslims in their time of ṣalāḥ and devotional services. The Muslims' qiblaḥ is Makkah.

qitāl – fighting, warring, combat.

qīrāt – a weight measure roughly equivalent to 0.21g; plural: qarārīt.

al-Quds – the Consecrated City; this, obviously, is the name of Jerusalem in the Arabic language.

Quraysh – refer to **Endnote 257** in Volume 7 for a brief history of the dominant power constituent of Makkah.

Qurayshī – having to do with the Quraysh.

Rajab – the seventh month of the Islamic hijrī calendar; the month in which the ancient Arabians used to perform the 'Umrah, and hence it is one of *al-ashhur al-ḥurum*. This month was frequently shifted in pre-Islamic times.

rak'aḥ – bowing down (during the physical or bodily performance of the ṣalāḥ); one unit of the ṣalāḥ, which ends with the rukū'; dual: rak'atān.

Ramaḍān – the ninth month of the Islamic hijrī calendar; the month of fasting for committed Muslims, and the auspicious month in which the Qur'anic revelation to Muhammad (ﷺ) began.

Rasūl-Allah (ﷺ) – the Messenger of Allah (ﷻ); also called Allah's Apostle (ﷺ), Allah's Messenger (ﷻ) or simply the Prophet (ﷺ). When this is used in Islamic literature, the majority of times it is in reference to the final messenger, Muhammad (ﷺ).

ribā – usury; a particular type of nefarious and vicious financial transaction that generates money from lending money.

ridā' – a gown worn over the shoulders and upper body. In context, this is the upper garment a male pilgrim wears while he is in the state of *iḥrām* for either Hajj or 'Umrah.

risālah – written communication, letter, or message; scriptural substance delivered to humanity/community by a prophet from Allah (ﷺ).

ṣadaqaḥ – charity; the act of giving money or wealth without expecting to be financially compensated for it.

sadd al-dharā'i' – prohibition of all (legal) means/channels leading to ḥarām.

Ṣaḥābah – the companions of the Prophet (ﷺ).

Ṣaḥīḥ(s) of various scholars – the compilation of hadiths collected by al-Bukhārī, Muslim, Abū Dāwūd, Ibn Mājah, al-Nisā'i, al-Tirmidhī, and others.

sā'ibah – a vagrant camel, dedicated (or assigned) to the idols, never to be worked, its hair not to be trimmed, and its milk only to be given to guests.

al-ṣa'id al-ṭayyib – hygienic topsoil.

ṣalāḥ – expressing a concentrated and devotional relationship with Allah (ﷻ); Muslims do this five times a day: Fajr, Ḍuhr, 'Aṣr, Maḡrib, and 'Ishā'.

Ṣalāḥ al-Jumu'aḥ – the weekly congregational communion with Allah (ﷻ) on the sixth day of the week at Ḍuhr time that Muslims are required to participate in.

salb – crucifixion.

ṣāliḥūn – those who sincerely do good works for the cause of Allah (ﷻ), expecting no earthly gratification or reward; plural of ṣāliḥ.

salwá – quails.

sariqaḥ – stealing, theft, larceny, robbery.

shafā'ah – *intercession, advocacy.*

shahīd – *martyr; plural: shuhadā'.*

shar'ī – *of or pertaining to the Shari'ah.* When this refers to the definition of certain words, it alludes to a specific meaning derived from the Shari'ah; for instance, the word *ṣalāh* literally means *blissing*, but its *shar'ī* meaning refers to the physical and mental communion with Allah (ﷻ) that Muslims are required to perform five times a day.

shari'ah – *legal course; more technically, the codes, procedures, and laws that take society in the direction of prosperity and survival.* The word originally meant — before the Qur'an was revealed — to take a path to a body of fresh water; now it generally refers to the body of Islamic law.

Shari'ah, the – *the Islamic legal system.*

Shawwāl – *the tenth month of the Islamic hijrī calendar; the month in which the Battle of Uḥud took place.*

shirk – *the act and implementation of equating or associating others with Allah (ﷻ) as divine and as authority; in other words the displacement of allegiance in man's heart and the dislocation of authority in man's life. See also mushrik above.*

shūrā – *a consultative assembly convened for the purpose of participatory decision-making.*

ṣiddiqūn – *those who remain true to their commitment to Allah (ﷻ) despite obvious challenges to the contrary; plural of ṣiddiq.*

sirājan munīran – *radiating lantern; allusion in the Qur'an to Muhammad (ﷺ) as a shining light.*

al-ṣirāṭ al-mustaqīm – *the straight span*; this is in reference to man’s meaningful and directional journey to Allah (ﷻ) during his life-long efforts and movements. It is a phrase used in every *ṣalāḥ* to focus a Muslim’s attention on the fact that he/she is pursuing a path that “leads to God.”

sunan – *social laws*. This is the word’s Qur’anic meaning in so far as such laws are the pattern of history, human activities, and nature. *Sunan* also refers to a compilation of hadith collected and organized by a *muhaddith*, one who searches hadith literature with a view to organizing and verifying hadiths of the Prophet (ﷺ). It is the plural of *sunnah*.

Sunnah, the – *the lifestyle pattern of the Prophet (ﷺ)*; or the final set of social laws imparted by Allah (ﷻ) to humanity through the agency of Muhammad (ﷺ).

sūrah – *ensemble of a body of themes in the Qur’an*; there are 114 *sūrah*s in the glorious Qur’an.

tadhkiyah – *conditional slaughter*; to slaughter with Islamic guidance an edible animal that is dying so that it dies by means of slaughter and not by whatever else was causing the death (such as a fall from a cliff).

tafsīr – *exegesis*; simple interpretation or critical interpretation of the meanings of the Qur’an.

tāghūt – *concentration and abuse of excessive power*; this word is usually used to describe governments and regimes that, having accumulated wealth and resources, find themselves in a “superpower” or “hyper-power” position in the world. The exercise of this kind of centralized power makes these governments rivals (in their own consciousness) to the power and authority of Allah (ﷻ). This aggregation and engrossment of power becomes satanic.

tāghūti – adjective referring to tāghūt.

ṭahārah – purification, hygiene.

ṭahūr – pure water.

takbīrah al-ihrām – the enunciation of the phrase “Allāhu akbar: Allah is the greatest (or greater),” that begins the ṣalāh.

talbiyah – following, obeying; observance, compliance; the invocation recited by Muslim pilgrims while they are in the state of *ihrām*: *labbayka allāhumma labbayk, labbayka lā sharīka laka labbayk, inna al-ḥamda wa-al-ni'mata laka wa-al-mulk, lā sharīka lak* (Here I am at Your service, O Allah, here I am at Your service; here I am at Your service, the One who has no rival [in authority and divinity], here I am at Your service; indeed praise and blessings are Yours as well as dominion; there is no competitor [in governance and dominion] against You).

taqwá – the feeling and thinking of Allah's (ﷻ) immediate power presence in the affairs of man that makes a person avoid Allah's (ﷻ) corrective interference in man's individual and social life.

tariqah – way, method, procedure, system; creed. It refers, usually within the Sufi domain, to an Islamic training program that is endorsed or founded by an Islamic scholar or mystic.

tawbah – repentance; it is a contrition, confession, and apology expressed by a guilty person who asks Allah (ﷻ) for forgiveness while vowing never to do such a thing again.

tawhīd – monotheism, singular divine authority; this combines in its connotational and denotational meanings all the consolidated and indivisible traits and understandings of Allah (ﷻ). In *His* self *He* is one; in *His* attributes *He* is one; therefore, in any way the human

mind tries to understand *Him*, *He* remains exalted — as *He* distinguishes *Himself* in *His* own words.

ṭawwa‘at – to prod, encourage, facilitate, or entice; to allow oneself to do something or to have no qualms about doing something.

tayammum – the performance of ghusl or wuḍū’ using topsoil as a substitute for water.

ta‘zīr – censure, blame, rebuke, reprimand; chastisement, punishment. In the *shar‘ī* sense, this is a penalty that is not as serious as that associated with the ḥadd strictures.

ummaḥ – the consolidation of a collective will.

Ummah, the Islamic – (uppercase reference is always to) the Islamic ummaḥ of Muhammad (ﷺ).

‘Umraḥ – the lesser Hajj; attending the Sacred Sanctuary in Makkah in a state of *iḥrām*, circling the Ka‘baḥ, and jogging between al-Ṣafā and al-Marwaḥ (no standing at ‘Arafāt is required).

wāḍī – valley.

wa-imsaḥū – And (all of you should) wipe.

wasīlaḥ – means, instrument, tool; method, process.

waṣīlaḥ – she-camel or ewe set free after seven (or ten) consecutive parturitions (birthing cycles).

wuḍū’ – ablution consisting of washing with water the hands, mouth, nose, arms, and face as well as wiping the hair and wiping or washing the feet.

Yawm 'Arafah – *the day in which the Hajj pilgrims stand on the plateau of 'Arafāt and make du'ā*. It is the most important ritual of Hajj, and a pilgrim's Hajj is not complete without him observing this day.

Yawm al-Nahr – *the Day of Sacrifice*.

yuḥāribūn – *they are waging war*.

zakāh – *freely paying money as an act of financial maturity*; usually the word is translated as *almsgiving* or *charity*, which not at all renders correctly its original meaning. Many times in the divine Writ the word *zakāh* is preceded by *aqāma*, *yuqīmūna*..., which means that this giving of money has to be institutionalized or regulated.

zālim – *one who does zulm; a tyrant, oppressor*.

zulm – *injustice/oppression*; this is the practical result, in human societies, of deleting Allah (ﷻ) as the only Authority and only Power in life. Many times in the divine Writ Allah (ﷻ) refers to *shirk* as being a massive expression of *zulm*. For those who are confused about who the *mushriks* are, they only need to look at parts of the world where there is colossal injustice and identify the operators of that injustice.

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